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OR, THEIR PLOT TO CAPTURE THE KING'S SON.

By HARRY MOORE.



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CHAPTER I.

THE REDCOATS AND THE MAIDEN.

"Stand aside, you cowards, and let the young lady pass!"

"What's that! You dare speak to us, soldiers of the king, in such a manner, you young dog?"

"Knock his head off!"

"Run him through!"

"Yes, spit him as if he were a frog!"

"Kill him!"

It was a pleasant evening in the latter part of the month of September of the year 1776. It was after nightfall, but was not very dark as the moon was shining and the street lamps were burning—for the scene to which we call the reader's attention took place on one of the streets running parallel with Broadway, in the city of New York.

Near the corner of a block, stretched across the sidewalk, were five British soldiers, and they were facing a beautiful girl of perhaps eighteen years, whose way the redcoats barred. A youth had come up behind the girl, and seeing what was going on had addressed the redcoats as given above, and then the redcoats had replied with threats to knock his head off, run him through, etc.

The youth was dressed in rough clothing, but his face was handsome, and he did not flinch or seem frightened by the threatening remarks of the redcoats. Not so the girl, however; she was evidently afraid they would do the youth injury, for she said:

"Oh, kind sir, I thank you, but I fear you will only get yourself in trouble, without being able to help me, for they outnumber you five to one, and you could not hope to do anything against them. Go your way, I beg of you, and leave me to my own devices. I do not think these—these—gentlemen will molest me."

"Oh, no, we won't molest you!" mockingly. "All we ask is a kiss or two apiece from those sweet lips of yours! Then you may go your way. As for the young scoundrel, however, he may not escape us, for we are not the kind of men to allow ourselves to be spoken to in such fashion.

He will have to stay, and settle with us for his insolence."

"Yes, yes!"

"That's right; he shall not escape us!"

"We'll teach him a lesson!"

"And one that he won't forget in a hurry!"

"Oh, don't you fellows worry," said the youth, calmly and without any show of nervousness; "I shall not try to get away. If you feel like teaching me a lesson, I shall do my best to learn all that I possibly can—and it may be that I may teach you a thing or two at the same time, so I won't be under obligations to you for favors."

The redcoats laughed loudly at this; it appealed to their sense of humor.

"Why, the young dog is a humorist!" cried one.

"Yes, a very funny fellow!"

"Give him a cap and bells and he would make a splendid clown."

"But we'll take some of that out of him!"

"Indeed we will!"

The youth took hold of the girl's arm and gently pulled her back and placed himself in front of her; as he did so he whispered in her ear: "I shall enter into a combat with them in a few moments, and the instant it begins do you run with all your might and get away."

The girl heard and understood, but she made up her mind that she would not run away and leave the brave youth alone. She clenched her little hands, set her pearly teeth together and said to herself that she would stay there, and if she could do anything to aid her champion she would do it. She looked around her and her eyes fell upon a heavy cudgel which lay in the street. It looked like a standard, such as are used on large drays, and she made up her mind that she would seize that and try her hand at thumping the redcoats over the head. "I'm pretty strong, if I am only a girl," she thought, "and I believe that I could knock a man senseless with that club. I'll try it, at any rate, just as sure as my name is Helen Morrison!"

"Oho, the young knight whispered something in the ear of the fair maiden!" cried one of the redcoats, jeer-

ingly. "Did he tell her that he would vanquish her enemies and then claim her as a reward? I suppose that was it—ha! ha! ha!"

"Never you mind what I said to the young lady," said the youth, quietly. "Just you fellows go your way and let the young lady alone and all will be will; otherwise——"

"Otherwise—what?" in a sneering voice.

"Otherwise there will be trouble."

"Trouble for who?"

"For you!"

Again the redcoats laughed loudly. They felt that they were masters of the situation, and were in no hurry to bring about the encounter. They felt like enjoying the situation for a while before ending the affair.

"So you think there will be trouble for us, eh?" in a jeering voice.

"I do."

"Well, say, young fellow, I like your show of confidence, I do, for a fact. But I fear it is entirely unwarranted."

"Oh, I don't know about that!"

"You don't?"

"No."

"Why, look here; how many of us are there?"

"Five, I believe."

"And you are only one."

"I am aware of that."

"Well, what chance will you stand against the five of us?"

"I don't know, I'm sure; that can only be decided by actual test."

"Oh, come now, young fellow, you know better than that."

"Do I?"

"Yes; you know that one man could not possibly stand up before five."

"No, I don't know it."

"Bah! you are a fool!"

"Thank you! You are another."

"What's that! You dare call me a fool?"

"You called me one."

"But—that's different."

"How is it different?"

"Why, I'm a—a—soldier of the king, while you are a—a——"

"Just as good a man as the soldier of any king who ever lived, or ever will live!"

"Well, say, I really do admire your insolence, young fellow!" almost gasped the redcoat.

"Do you?"

"Yes; but for your assurance we should have given you a good thrashing long ere this."

"Then it pays to be insolent, and to be possessed of assurance, doesn't it?"

"Not much to speak of; it has simply delayed your punishment, that is all."

"Oh, that's it?"

"Yes."

"Well, you needn't put it off any longer on my account."

"No?"

"No. If you are determined to give me a thrashing, to teach me a lesson, and so forth, go right to work and do it. Don't keep me in suspense."

"Oh, you would like to have it over with, eh?"

"Yes."

"And for that very reason we shall be in no hurry, eh, boys?"

"That's right."

"No, it is fun to keep the young dog in suspense."

"It is great sport!"

"Yes, the best we've struck since coming to this beastly country."

"So you think it fun to keep the 'young dog' in suspense, do you, you old hound?" remarked the youth, looking straight at the redcoat who had applied the epithet to him.

"See here," bristled the Briton; "don't you dare call me a hound! I won't have it!"

"You called me a 'young dog.'"

"Well, that is different."

"Not at all; if I am a 'young dog,' you are an old hound."

"See here, you want to be careful, young fellow!" threatened enigmatically. "We intend only to give you a thrashing and let you go whining away, but if you get too saucy we may change our minds and cut your head off!"

"Oh, that would be terrible, wouldn't it? The youth's tone was mocking, and the redcoats stared at the bold young fellow in amazement. They could not understand it; the more they tried to frighten and intimidate him, that bolder he grew.

"Say, you're too saucy altogether!" growled one of the redcoats.

"He needs some of the egotism and insolence taken out of him!"

"That's right!"

"Yes; he is altogether too impudent."

"A sound beating will be good for him!"

"Well, why don't you go to work and administer th

beating, then?" the youth asked, calmly. "Why do you stand there and talk about it?"

"Say, comrades, we will have to do it, I guess!" said one. "Are you ready?"

"Ready!" came back in chorus.

"Then go for——"

He did not complete the command, for the youth took the initiative with such quickness as to astonish the redcoats. He suddenly leaped forward and struck the speaker fair between the eyes. It was a strong blow and knocked the soldier down, kerthump! And then the youth followed this up by attacking the four in a fierce manner. At the same time he called out to the girl, who was standing still, watching the combat: "Run, miss! Get away while I keep these scoundrels busy!"

"Oh, that's your scheme, is it?" growled one of the redcoats, striking out viciously. "Well, we'll soon settle you and then we can turn our attention to the girl."

The youth's words aroused the girl to action; but not to the action which he intended. Instead of hastening away from the spot the maiden leaped out into the street and seized the cudgel she had noticed a while before. She was only a girl, true, but she was pretty strong, and her heart was stout. She suddenly seemed to feel herself possessed of the strength of a giant, and swinging the cudgel around she dealt one of the redcoats a blow alongside the head and knocked him down as if he had been hit by a cannon-ball, a yell of pain and terror escaping him as he went down.

Again the girl swung the stick, and, crack! it landed at the butt of the ear of another of the redcoats and down he went with a howl and a thump. The fellow who had been knocked down by the youth at the first was now scrambling to his feet, with his eyes on the youth, and he received a blow on the top of the head which put him down again with neatness and dispatch, and caused him to see more stars than he had ever before witnessed.

"Bravo, miss!" cried the youth, who, though amazed by the warrior-like tactics of the girl, was, nevertheless, delighted. "Give it to the scoundrels! We are more than a match for a dozen such fellows! Give it to them!" and at the same instant he knocked another of the redcoats clear off the sidewalk and into the gutter.

This left only one man on his feet, and he was so busy, trying to watch the youth and the maiden both at the same time, that he could do nothing, and the result was that he quickly went down, the youth knocking him backward with a blow from his fist, and the girl sending him clear down with a lusty blow from the cudgel.

"Hurrah! with your help the enemy has been vanquished!" the youth cried. "Miss, you are the bravest girl I ever saw!"

"Well, ought I not to do something when the trouble is all of my causing?" the girl exclaimed. "It was on my account that you got into the difficulty, and I made up my mind right from the first that I would stand by you and help you, if I could. I saw the cudgel and I seized it, and laid about me, striking wherever I saw a good chance, and this is the result. Oh, I am so glad that I was able to render you some assistance!"

"Well, I am glad, too, for I fear they would have been too strong for me had I been left to fight it out alone. Have a care, there, my redcoat friend! Don't try to draw a weapon! It isn't etiquette, and I must set the seal of my disapproval upon any such action!"

Out shot the youth's fist, crack! it sounded as it struck the Briton's face and down he went, with a howl of rage and pain, and, thump, the pistol which he had partly drawn falling to the sidewalk.

The others, seeing how their comrade had fared, made no attempt to draw weapons, but clambered to their feet and hastened away from the spot. The last man knocked down was, of course, the last one to get up, and he did not make a second attempt to draw a weapon, but took to his heels the same as his comrades had done.

"Well, we have whipped them!" the youth said, with a smile; "we have routed the enemy, horse, foot and dragoons, and it is wholly owing to your masterly tactics with the cudgel. Miss, I congratulate you—and I thank you, too, for the assistance which you rendered me."

"Oh, it is I who should and do thank you, sir!" the girl exclaimed. "But for your interference those terrible men would have caused me lots of worry and trouble. I can never cancel the debt which I owe you, I fear."

"You owe me nothing, miss; it was my duty to do what I did, and I did only what I should expect any man to do for a sister of mine who might have been situated as you were."

"That is the way you look at it because you are a noble, brave and generous-hearted man; but I look at it differently. I consider that I owe you a great debt—but perhaps we should not be standing here. Those terrible men may regain their courage and come and attack you with weapons. Yes—they are coming now! They are coming back! What shall we do—what shall we do?"

The youth looked up the street and saw that the girl had spoken truly. The five redcoats were coming back, and

without doubt they had weapons in their hands and murder in their hearts.

CHAPTER II.

SOME FRIGHTENED REDCOATS.

"Oh, I know what we will do!" the girl breathed. "Come with me!"

She led the youth up a narrow alley, which opened at the left, and as the redcoats saw the two disappear they set up a wild yell of rage.

"We will have to hurry!" the girl breathed. "They will be after us in a few moments."

"You set the pace and I will keep along with you," the youth replied.

The girl ran as fast as she could, till they came to about the middle of the block and then she opened a gate and entered the rear yard belonging to one of the houses in the row. As the youth followed there came loud, threatening yells from the redcoats. Evidently they had seen this action on the part of the two.

The girl hastened to the back door and after fumbling around for a few moments the door was opened and she said: "Come; follow me!"

The interior of the building was dark; not a ray of light was to be seen anywhere, but the two entered unhesitatingly and then the girl pushed the door shut and her companion heard a peculiar click as if a bolt had automatically shot into place.

"Where are we?" the youth asked.

"In a vacant house."

"Ah!"

"Yes; but come, the redcoats will soon be here and they may batter the door down."

The girl took the youth by the hand and led him along what was evidently a hallway, and the maiden seemed to be familiar with the way, for she did not hesitate. When they had taken a dozen steps there came a loud knocking on the back door through which they had just come.

"Open the door!" roared a voice. "Open at once or we will break it down!"

"I am afraid that is just what they will do!" the girl said. "Well, we must hasten upstairs and then I think we will be able to find a hiding place."

They moved along, and presently the girl said: "Ah, here is the staircase. Now we will soon be where they

can't find us, even if they do break the door—ah! there it goes, now!" as a loud crash was heard.

This was undoubtedly the case; the redcoats had broken the door down and were entering the house.

The fugitives hastened up the stairs and were two thirds of the way up when a peculiar, whitish light illumined the hall. Involuntarily they paused and looked back and at the same instant startled cries came from the direction of the redcoats.

In the hall, as we have said, was a peculiar, dim, whitish light, and near the extreme front end of the hall stood a tall, spectral-looking white figure. The light was not strong enough to make it possible to see just what the white figure did look like, and this fact caused it to look uncanny to the last degree. Any one who believed in ghosts would have had no hesitation in pronouncing this one, and indeed almost captain of them all.

The youth and maiden stared at the white figure in silence, and then came exclamations from the rear end of the hall where the redcoats were standing.

"Great guns!"

"What is it?"

"Heavens, fellows, it's a ghost!"

"Say, I don't like the looks of that thing!"

"Who are you? What are you?"

"Begone, base men!" came in a wailing, threatening, sepulchral tone. "Beware! Go away!"

"Go away?"

"Yes, yes! Why have you broken in here in this rude fashion? Beware, lest you earn my anger! Beware, I say!"

"And who are you?"

"Who am I?"

"Yes."

"I am the Queen of Egypt! Ha! ha! ha;" and a thrilling, almost blood-curdling laugh went up and echoed and reverberated along the empty hallway.

"Bah!" cried the leader of the redcoats. "You are a queen of frauds, that's what you are! Come on, fellows; that girl and scoundrel entered here and we will find them in spite of all the ghosts and 'Queens of Egypt' that can be scared up!"

The speaker started forward, his four comrades following more slowly and evidently reluctantly. They did not like to risk the unknown dangers that might have to be encountered if they went contrary to the orders of the strange figure in white.

"Back, I say!" came from the white figure. "If you advance any further I will bring darkness on you and

then strike you to death from above, behind, all around you!"

"We had better be careful, Groggin," said one of the men, in a trembling voice; "we don't know what trouble we may get into, if we fool around here."

"Bah! it is somebody masquerading for the purpose of scaring us away," the leader cried; "come on! I am not to be so easily disposed of!"

The five redcoats continued to advance until they were almost below the youth and the maiden, who still remained on the stairs, watching the strange scene with interest, and then suddenly the peculiar light went out, leaving all in total darkness. Following this there was a peculiar, rustling sound and cries of dismay and even fright escaped the lips of the redcoats.

"What is that?"

"Where has the thing gone?"

"It threatened to strike us from above and all around!" half groaned one. "Say, let's get out of here!"

A sudden thought came to the youth, and he hastened to put it into effect. The redcoats were in the hallway, right below, and by leaning over the stair rail he was sure he could reach the men's heads. He could try, at any rate, and he leaned as far over the rail as he could, and holding with one hand to keep from falling he reached down with the other and made a grab. He got hold of the hat and also the hair of one of the redcoats and gave a fierce pull that brought a terrible howl of commingled pain and terror from the victim.

"Oh!—ow! Help! Murder! Oh, I'm killed! I'm a dead man!" Such were a few of the cries and remarks given utterance to by the fellow, and the rest were somewhat startled and called out questions.

"What's the matter?"

"What are you howling about?"

"Where are you hurt?"

"Oh, shut up!" this from the leader. "Stop your howling! There's nothing the matter with you!"

The youth on the stairs located the last speaker by his voice, and made a grab in his direction, with good success. He got hold of hat and hair, both, as he had in the case of the other, and a yell went up from the redcoat that was lusty and heartfelt to say the least.

"Ten thousand furies!" the redcoat roared. "Oh, my head! Somebody or something has pulled all my hair out by the roots!"

"It's that thing—ghost, or whatever it is!" cried one.

"Let's get out of here before we lose our heads!"

"I told you to go away!" came in the deep, sepulchral

voice. "I warned you not to remain. Now go; for if you do not your fate will be terrible!"

"Come on, fellows!" cried one of the men, in a tremulous voice; "let's get out of this!" and then followed the sound of hurried footsteps.

"Hold on, there! Stop!" called out the voice of the leader. "Don't be fools. There is nothing supernatural about this. Somebody is playing tricks on us, and I, for one, am not going to let them be successful and scare us away as if we were a parcel of boys. Come back here, I say, and stand your ground. I am going to find that young scoundrel and the girl before I leave the house!"

"Foolish man!" came in the sepulchral voice. "Be warned and take your departure while yet you may!"

The redcoats had paused when first spoken to by their leader, and now they started again, but again he ordered them to stop.

"Come back here!" he commanded. "We are going to look through this house in spite of all the white figures that can be scared up! Come on, all of you!"

The men stopped, as could be told by the sound, and started back. They were soon back where they had been and then the entire party started forward once more.

The girl took hold of the youth's hand and pulled, to let him know that she thought they had better be moving, and so the two made their way on up the stairs, being careful to step very softly so as not to be heard. As they reached the landing above the strange voice was again heard:

"For the last time I warn you bold, bad men to beware!" the voice said. "Take your departure, if you wish to save your lives! Do not dare my anger."

"Bah! I do not fear you or your threats!" the redcoat leader cried. "Come along, boys; we'll go upstairs and look through, for I think that is where we will find our game."

"Come!" whispered the girl, and she led the youth back along the hall until they reached the extreme end. Here they ensconced themselves behind a large, bulky piece of furniture, probably a wardrobe, and waited.

"Are we not in rather a dangerous position here?" whispered the youth. "They will come this way and will be sure to find us."

"No, they won't find us—listen." There was a faint, clicking sound, and then the girl took the youth's hand and guided it along the wall back of them; it was found that there was an opening a couple of feet in width and perhaps three feet in height immediately behind where the two were standing.

"A secret opening," the girl whispered. "There is a fairly good-sized compartment there and a flight of steps which lead to a similar compartment on the ground floor. If those men crowd us we can go down and slip out."

"Why not do so now?"

"Wait just a few moments and see what happens."

The youth said no more. He was somewhat curious, himself, and was willing to remain and await developments, now that he knew they had a safe retreat right at hand.

The redcoats were now almost to the top of the stairs, judging by the sound of their footsteps. Louder and louder the footsteps sounded and then the men were on the landing. At this instant the hall became faintly illumined, as the lower one had been a few minutes before; and then there was a rustling sound and the white figure appeared in the hall, facing the redcoats, who had involuntarily paused at the landing.

The figure lifted one arm and pointed toward the five men. "I told you to go," said the sepulchral voice; "I gave you fair warning and you refused to profit by it. Now your deaths will be on your own heads! Your time has come—base men, you must die!"

The white figure started quickly forward toward the redcoats and a blood-curdling, unearthly shriek went up from it as it did so.

This was too much for the courage of the redcoats. They could not understand how the figure had got upstairs, if it were not a supernatural being, and their terror got the better of them suddenly, with the result that they whirled and dashed headlong down the stairs, giving utterance to yells of terror as they did so. One fell and the other tripped over him and fell also, and all five landed at the bottom of the stairs in a wildly kicking, squirming mixture. Their arms and legs were all tangled up together, but they managed to disentangle them, and, scrambling to their feet, fled along the hall at the top of their speed. When they reached the door they all tried to get out at once and got stuck there for a few moments, but finally got the jam broken and got through and out into the yard.

The girl and youth had witnessed the hurried flight of the redcoats with pleasure and no little amusement, for the girl knew, and the youth suspected, that the white figure was a friend of theirs.

"Oh, aunty, you did that splendidly!" said the girl. "You have frightened them clear away!"

"Is that you, Helen?" the white figure asked. "I was sure it was, though, when you entered without having to

have the door opened for you. I knew no one else would know of the secret spring."

"Yes, it is I, aunty," the girl replied; then to her companion she said: "This is Aunt Esther, as we call her. She has lived in this house thirty years. It belongs to my father, and as he wishes it taken care of, aunty stays here. It is an old house, full of secret panels and passages, and stairways leading from floor to floor, so it was easy for aunty to play ghost and frighten the redcoats."

"Well, it was a very good thing," said the youth; "the redcoats were given a good scare, and I don't think they will venture into the house again."

"I hardly think so," the girl agreed; "aunty, this is a young gentleman who interfered to save me from being insulted by those five scoundrels."

The woman addressed as "aunty" by the girl had by this time unwrapped a sheet from around her and stood revealed, an intelligent-looking old woman of perhaps sixty years.

"By the way," said the girl, with a smile, "it is about time I was knowing to whom I owe my rescue from the unpleasant position in which those hated redcoats had placed me. Please tell me your name."

"My name?" the youth replied, smiling. "It does not signify, but since you wish to know it, and as you do not seem to like the redcoats, who are my deadly enemies, I will tell you. My name is Dick Slater."

CHAPTER III.

THE KING'S SON.

"I've heard of you!" the girl exclaimed. "You are the captain of the company of young men known as 'The Liberty Boys of '76'!"

"You are right," the youth replied.

"I am so glad that I have met you and made your acquaintance, Mr. Slater!" said Helen. "I understand now how it was that the odds of five redcoats against you did not seem to daunt you."

Dick smiled. "Don't flatter me, Miss Helen," he said.

"I am not; I mean what I say. But, now, I think we had better be going, don't you?"

"Yes; I must be going, at any rate."

"We can go out the front way," said Helen, "and then if the redcoats are watching for us to come forth from the rear doorway they will be disappointed."

"So they will; that is a good plan."

"What shall I do about the rear door, Miss Helen?" the woman asked. "The redcoats smashed it down, you know."

"I will tell father, aunty, and he will send Willis, the butler, to fix it up for to-night."

"Very well."

Then the three made their way downstairs and to the front door, which the woman opened. Dick and Helen stepped through, bade the woman good-night, and then walked up the street.

"Is it far to your home, Miss Helen?" Dick asked.

"Not very; we will soon be there."

A walk of ten minutes brought them to Helen's home, and she led the way up onto the stoop and rang the bell. The door was opened by a servant and the two entered, the servant looking surprised when he saw Dick, who was a total stranger, of course.

"Who in the world has young missy picked up, I wonder?" the man said to himself.

As the two passed the man a gentleman came forth from a room at one side, and as soon as he saw Helen he hastened forward.

"Ah, you have come at last, Helen!" he exclaimed. "We were beginning to feel uneasy regarding you. What kept you? And who is the——"

"This, father, is Mr. Dick Slater, of whom we have heard so much recently. He rendered me a great favor this evening and I made him come home with me as I wished you to make his acquaintance and thank him for what he did for me. Mr. Slater, my father."

Dick grasped the hand which the man extended. "I am glad to know you, sir," he said, courteously.

"And I am glad to know you, Dick Slater!" was the hearty reply. "I should have been glad to know you under any circumstances, but my daughter says you rendered her a great service, and that makes me doubly glad to know you. What happened, daughter?"

"I will tell you, father. I was stopped on the street by five British soldiers, and they insisted that I should give them some kisses—the insolent puppies!" and the girl made a wry face.

A frown came over Mr. Morrison's face. "The scoundrels!" he exclaimed. "The redcoats, Mr. Slater, are arrogant and insulting. They seem to think that they are the salt of the earth and that the American people were created for their especial benefit, to prey upon and rob and insult as they please."

"They are bad enough, I know," said Dick.

"Yes; and I don't know what I should have done if

Mr. Slater had not come along and interfered in my behalf," said Helen.

"Did the redcoats go away without offering to attack you?" asked Mr. Morrison of Dick, in surprise.

"No; they attempted to give me a thrashing for interfering," said Dick, with a smile.

"'Attempted,' you say? I should have thought that they would not have had much difficulty in accomplishing it. There were five, you say?"

"Yes; but I rather took them by surprise by getting in the first blow, and then your daughter helped me greatly."

"How was that?" in surprise.

Dick smiled, while Helen blushed as the youth explained: "She seized a stout stick which was lying in the street and laid about her to such effect that we soon had the entire five redcoats lying on the pavement, some seeing stars, the others with very sore heads."

Mr. Morrison laughed heartily, and playfully pulled his daughter's hair. "That's just like Helen," he said. "She has always been a believer in taking plenty of physical exercise, and is quite strong. I'll warrant that those redcoats will carry sore heads for some time to come!"

"I think so, sir," smiled Dick.

"But I am forgetting what a debt of gratitude I owe you, Mr. Slater," the gentleman said; "allow me to thank you most heartily and sincerely. I assure you that in rendering my daughter such a favor you have made me your friend for life!"

"Don't speak of it," said Dick, modestly; "no thanks are required. I did nothing more than my plain duty."

"Not all men would look at it in that light; and even if they did it would not lessen the debt of gratitude which we owe you, by any means. But tell me the story of the encounter. You put the redcoats to flight, you say?"

"Yes, father; but they came back again with weapons in their hands and we were forced to flee for our lives."

"Ah, yes! So I would have supposed would be the case. But how did you manage to escape from them?"

Then Helen told about entering the house and the adventures while there, and how Esther had played ghost and frightened the redcoats away.

This pleased Mr. Morrison greatly. "Aunt Esther deserves a nice present from you, Helen," he said; "and you must get her something to-morrow."

"I will, father."

"But the broken door; I will send Willis at once, with instructions to fix the door up as best he can for to-night, and then to-morrow I can have it rehung."

The butler was summoned and sent on his errand, and

then Mr. Morrison and Helen conducted Dick into the library.

"I suppose Helen has told you that I am a true patriot," remarked Mr. Morrison, "so you need not fear to talk freely before me. Indeed, if there is anything I can do to help you in any way, you have but to command me."

"Thank you; you are very kind," replied Dick. "I am in New York City on very important and particular business."

"So I supposed. You have made quite a reputation for yourself by your wonderful spy work, Mr. Slater."

"I have simply done the best that I could, Mr. Morrison, and I judge that I owe as much to luck as to good work on my part," was the modest reply.

"Not much luck about it, I am thinking. I have heard a great deal of talk regarding your feats, and the manner of their accomplishment does not seem to indicate that luck was much of a factor, but rather good work and good judgment."

"That is what I think, too, father," said Helen.

"There, there! spare me," smiled Dick.

"By the way, supper is ready," said Mr. Morrison; "it has been ready for some time, and we were waiting for Helen to come. Her coming, with the story you have told, caused me to forget. But come to the dining-room at once, and after supper you can tell me all about the matter which has brought you to New York, Mr. Slater."

So they went to the dining-room and ate supper, after which they again returned to the library, and having seated themselves, Mr. Morrison looked expectantly at Dick and said: "Now, Mr. Slater, I shall be glad to hear all about it, and if there is anything which I or my daughter, or both of us can do to aid you, it shall be done."

"Very well, and thank you," said Dick; "I am in New York on rather an unusual and unique business."

Mr. Morrison and Helen looked eagerly at the youth, but said nothing.

"I suppose you two are both aware," said Dick, after a moment's pause, "that King George's son is in New York."

Both nodded. "Yes, I know it," replied Mr. Morrison; "he came over with Admiral Howe."

"I've seen him!" said Helen.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Dick. "When did you see him and where?"

"I saw him day before yesterday, and he was on the piazza of Fraunce's Tavern."

"Are you sure it was him?" Miss Helen.

"Yes; at any rate, there was a great crowd looking at

him, and I heard a number say it was 'Little George,' the king's son."

"It must have been him, then," said Dick, his eyes glowing with pleasure and eagerness; "and I judge that it is more than likely that he has rooms at the tavern."

"Quite likely, I should say," said Helen.

"How large a youth is he, Helen?" her father asked.

"Oh, he is quite a good-sized boy, father."

"He is about fourteen years old, sir," said Dick.

"Ah, yes; but what about him, Mr. Slater? What has he to do with the business which brings you to New York?"

"A great deal," with a smile.

"A great deal?"

"Yes; I might say that he has all to do with it."

"Explain."

"I will do so; I came to New York for the especial purpose of spying out the whereabouts in the city of young George, the son of King George. I am to find out where he is staying, watch him closely and learn what his programme for each day consists of—where he goes, and so forth. In fact, I am to learn as much about him and his doings as I possibly can in a reasonable length of time."

Mr. Morrison and Helen were staring at Dick in wondering amazement. Presently the former said: "But why are you to do this? What does it mean? What good will it do? What does it matter what the king's son does or where he goes? I do not understand."

"You will easily understand the significance of it all when I tell you that there is a great plot on foot—to capture the king's son!"

For a few moments Mr. Morrison and Helen were silent, dumb with amazement. The audacity of the scheme was such as to daze them temporarily.

"Goodness!" exclaimed Mr. Morrison, finally; "that is the most daring, most audacious scheme that could be conceived! I must say that you almost took my breath away when you said that, Mr. Slater."

"Oh, it is a glorious plan!" breathed Helen, her eyes sparkling. "It is splendid, and I hope that you will succeed. Oh, I hope you will succeed in capturing the king's son! It would be a great stroke, would it not?"

"Yes, indeed," said Dick; "if we can capture the king's son and get him out of the city and up into our encampment then General Washington will be in a position to end the war. He will be able to say to King George, 'You may ransom your son by granting independence to the American colonies,' and the king will be forced to agree."

"It is a daring scheme," said Mr. Morrison; "but it is not impossible of accomplishment."

"But it will be very difficult of accomplishment, I should think," said Helen.

"Yes, it will be a very difficult thing to do," agreed Dick; "but we are going to try to accomplish it, just the same."

"You may count on us to assist you by every means within our power, Mr. Slater," said the host.

"Yes, indeed!" from Helen, and it was evident that she was in earnest.

"I am very much obliged," said Dick; "but I do not know that there is anything that you can do—unless, indeed, something unexpected should occur."

"Well, you must always bear in mind that our home is a refuge for you, if you get into danger," said Mr. Morrison; "and, indeed, now that I think of it, why can you not make our house your home or headquarters while engaged in your work in the city?"

"Yes, yes; that is it! You must do it, Mr. Slater!" cried Helen. "It is not far from here to Fraunce's Tavern, and this will be a splendid place for you to stay; and father and I will be on the lookout to aid you at any time if you should need assistance."

"You are very kind," said Dick; "but I have already engaged a room at a tavern on Broadway, and so might as well stay there."

"Just as you like," said Mr. Morrison; "but we should be glad to have you with us."

"You must promise to call at least once a day, Mr. Slater," said Helen; "I shall be so eager to know what progress you are making."

"I will try to drop in once a day," said Dick; and then, after some further conversation, he bade them good-night and took his departure, as he wished to do some work before going to his room in the tavern.

He made his way down the street in the direction of Fraunce's Tavern. He knew where the building was located, and had no trouble in finding it.

When he got there he was surprised to find a great crowd. The street was crowded and jammed with people. It was easy to see what it was all about. The piazza of the tavern was lighted, and upon it stood a number of British officers. Near the centre of the piazza was a large easy-chair placed on a couple of boxes, which made the chair considerably higher than the floor of the piazza.

"What is going on here?" Dick asked of a man, beside whom he was standing.

"Wait a few moments and you'll see," was the reply.

"Ah!—look! There he comes, now! See, that is the

king's son and our future king! And that is General Howe with him!"

A British officer, accompanied by a boy of perhaps fourteen years, had just emerged from the front door, and were now on the piazza. As they paused beside the chair a wild yell went up from the crowd, followed by cheers for young George, the future king.

The general, who was indeed the commander-in-chief of the British army, and the boy bowed to the right and to the left and then straight ahead, and then the boy was assisted to a seat in the chair of state.

Dick eyed the boy critically and with some degree of interest. "Not a bad-looking fellow," was Dick's comment to himself; "but there are thousands of just as bright and good-looking boys in this country. I don't see why we people of America should bow down and worship and acknowledge as our master the father of that boy or the boy himself, when his father is dead."

The majority of the people in the crowd seemed wild with delight and enthusiasm, however. They seemed to really think that it was a great honor to be even allowed to gaze upon the son of a king. When the cheers were given on the first appearance of General Howe and the boy, the people had removed their hats, but Dick had not done so, and he heard a number of men around him make remarks derogatory to him and denouncing him as a boor and an ignoramus. Evidently the speakers did not question the youth's loyalty, but thought he did not know enough to doff his hat in the presence of the son of the king.

Dick heard the remarks, but paid no attention, simply smiling to himself and feeling a shade of pity for the poor fools who could think that just because the boy sitting there in the chair on the piazza was the son of a man called king, that he could be any better or greater than any other boy equally endowed with brains and moral qualities.

Suddenly a hush fell upon the assemblage. General Howe was about to speak. He stood beside the chair in which sat the king's son, and, raising his hand, addressed the people in a little speech, which Dick realized was stereotyped, and had been used a number of times on similar occasions. He introduced young George, the son of the king, said that the fact that the king had permitted his son to come over to America proved his confidence in the loyalty of the great majority, and also that the king's forces would soon triumph. He got off a lot of talk about being loyal, for the sake of the boy, and said he hoped that there was no one in the crowd who cherished rebel senti-

ments, and that if such was the case he hoped that from this time on he would be a good and loyal subject of the king. "Look at this handsome and noble boy," he said, eloquently; "look at him and think what an honor to be in his presence! Why, think of it; he is an embryo king! As the eldest son he will ascend to the throne when his father dies. You who have stood here to-night in the presence of this noble youth will have something worth while to tell to your children and your children's children. Ah, it may be a long time before the people of America will have another such opportunity, another such honor thrust upon them!" And in saying this he spoke the truth.

General Howe wound up by requesting that all in that vast crowd should doff their hats and give three cheers for their future king, and the suggestion or request was greeted with shouts of approval, and the people hastened to remove their hats.

Dick looked all around and nowhere could he see a man with his hat on. As for himself, he did not intend to doff his hat and cheer the king's son, and thinking that he might get into trouble if he remained, he decided to withdraw from the crowd. He started to do so, but was too late; for a fierce-looking man at his side hissed in his ear:

"Take off your hat, you impudent rascal, or I'll knock it off!"

"That's the talk!" said another who stood near and had heard what the man said. "Take off your hat or we'll not only knock it off but we'll knock your head off along with it!"

CHAPTER IV.

DICK ENTERS THE TAVERN.

"Don't interfere with me," said Dick; "I am in a hurry. I have to go at once as I have some business to attend to."

"You don't go till you take off your hat and give three cheers for the king's son!" hissed the man who had first spoken, and he seized Dick by the arm as he spoke.

"That's right; don't let him go!" cried the second speaker, and others near at hand murmured their approval. Of course, the men all spoke low, for they did not wish to disturb General Howe.

"Take your hand off me!" said Dick, in a warning tone.

"Take your hat off!" was the reply.

"For the last time, take your hand off me!" Dick was becoming angry.

For reply the man made an attempt to knock the youth's hat off. Dick dodged, however, and the fellow missed. The next instant the youth's fist shot out, and, catching the man underneath the chin, drove him back against the people surrounding him, with such force as to cause a great trampling about by a score or more, who were almost upset by the impact. Involuntarily the fellow let go his hold on Dick and the youth whirled and bounded away.

Instantly there was a general melee. Everybody within reaching distance of Dick was striking at him, but they were so crowded that their arms were not free and they could not do much, if any, damage.

Dick, however, was getting in some very good work; he struck out fiercely, all around him, and by whirling rapidly managed to keep everybody from getting hold upon him. Had he not pursued these tactics he would undoubtedly have been seized from behind and held in spite of all he could do.

There were cries and exclamations of wonder and amazement from the crowd, and the British officers on the piazza—and even the embryo king, who, strange to say, was possessed of human curiosity—uttered exclamations of wonder and surprise, and looked eagerly to see what was going on.

Dick was a terror when he made up his mind to be, and he was now on his mettle. He was determined not to doff his hat, and he was equally determined to make his escape. So he fought with desperate vim and energy, and as many of the members of the crowd were non-combatants he did not have to fight every one with whom he came in contact. Indeed, the noncombatants, in trying to get back out of the way, aided him materially by interfering with those who were trying to get at him to strike him; and the result was that Dick finally succeeded in reaching the edge of the crowd and breaking through. Just as he did so some one raised the shout that the youth was a rebel, and it was taken up by a hundred tongues.

"A rebel! A rebel!" was the cry, and then a number set out in pursuit of Dick.

It happened that there was a side street close at hand, and Dick struck out down this street at the top of his speed. After him like a pack of hounds after a fox came the pursuers. They kept up a terrible yelling, and seemed to think that noise would aid them in catching the fugitive.

In this, needless to say, they were in error; noise had no terrors for Dick Slater. Indeed, the more his pursuers

suers yelled the better he liked it, for he knew they were wasting a lot of wind that would come in handy later on in the race, but which would then be found missing.

Onward dashed the brave "Liberty Boys," and after him came the pursuers. The majority of these were civilians; Dick had not seen many redcoats among the spectators in front of Fraunce's Tavern. Doubtless they had seen the play enacted so often that it had become distasteful to them. Indeed, to tell the truth, even among British soldiers the only kings they cared much about or had respect for were the four which go to the making up of every well-regulated pack of playing cards; so they could not be expected to take much interest in the son of a king.

On account of the fact that the majority of Dick's pursuers were civilians there was no firing, as there would undoubtedly have been had there been many soldiers. So Dick was not in much danger; all he had to guard against was being overtaken and captured at close range.

This the youth did not intend to let happen, and he did not. He was a fast runner and easily left his pursuers behind, and after five minutes of fast work he found himself out of sight of his pursuers. He cut through to Broadway and strolled along, cool, calm and collected, and no one to have looked at him would have supposed that he had just been running for his life from a mob of furious royalty worshippers.

Back at the Tavern there was considerable excitement. The cry of "rebel" had aroused the British officers, and they were desirous of finding out whether or not the fugitive really was a "rebel." General Howe called a number of the members of the crowd up to the piazza, and questioned them and soon learned all that there was to be learned, which was not much. It was to the effect that a young-looking man in the outskirts of the crowd had refused to doff his hat in the presence and in honor of the son of the king, and that he had struck several men who had made remarks expressing their disapproval of his actions. The men were careful to say that the suspected "rebel" had taken the initiative in the affair, which, of course, was not true, as Dick had not struck any one until after he had been seized.

Some of the men, by straining their imaginations a little, stated that they had heard the "rebel" give utterance to threatening remarks, such as that he would kill the king's son if he got a chance; and with utterances such as "Death to the king!" and so forth, and this aroused the anger of the British officers not a little.

"I hope they will catch him!" said General Howe; "he is in all probability a very dangerous character."

"Doubtless he will be caught and brought back," said one of the officers. "I don't think he will be able to escape."

"We will wait a while and see," said the British commander-in-chief.

So they waited patiently for a period of perhaps fifteen or twenty minutes and then the portion of the crowd that had gone in pursuit of Dick came straggling back, with the report that they had lost track of the fugitive, that he had made good his escape.

This was a disappointment to General Howe and the other officers, but it could not be helped, and they made the best of it.

General Howe now called upon the people to doff their hats to the king's son and give him three cheers, and this was done. The members of the crowd gazed about them eagerly, in search of another who might have the temerity to keep his hat on, but could see no such individual.

Meanwhile Dick had strolled back down Broadway and had reached the outskirts of the crowd, and was a spectator of the scene. He was not really in the crowd, this time, but just outside it, and his not doffing his hat or cheering did not attract attention.

A few minutes later General Howe and the king's son, with the other officers, went back into the tavern and the crowd dispersed.

This was what Dick was waiting for, and as soon as the street was clear he made his way across it, walked down to Fraunce's Tavern, and, turning aside, he made his way along the side of the building.

He made attempts to look through the windows, but they were frosted, and he could not do so with success, and he kept on till he was at the rear. Here he found a cellar-way, down the steps of which he went, and tried the door. It was locked, but the youth lurched against it with all his strength and it came open. On examination Dick found that it had been held by one bolt and the socket into which the bolt fitted had been torn loose from the door-jam.

"So far so good," thought Dick; "I would like to locate the rooms occupied by the king's son, and then when we come for the purpose of making a prisoner of him and carrying him away we will know exactly where to go."

The youth made his way slowly and carefully across the cellar. He soon found the steps leading to the first floor, and made his way up these. He tried the door at the top and found it was not fastened. He pushed it open an inch or two and looked through. He was looking into

the kitchen and as luck would have it there was no one in the room.

Dick did not hesitate; he pushed the door open and stepped into the room. Closing the door he stole on tiptoe across the kitchen. There was a candle burning at one side of the room and he could see where he was going.

He soon reached the door at the farther side and opened it softly. The hall lay in front of him. Dick stepped out into the hall, which extended clear to the front door. At the farther end was a wide staircase leading to the second floor, but as there were lights at that end of the hall, and people going and coming most all the time, it would be the height of folly to attempt to get upstairs by the main stairway.

Then Dick thought of the servants' stairway. "There must be one at the rear," he said to himself; "the servants would not use the main staircase. I'll look and will find a stairway somewhere here in the back hall, I am sure."

There was no light in the back hall, and as the candles in the front end were not strong, where Dick was standing was so dark that he was in no danger of being seen by people who were ascending and descending the main staircase.

He made his way back toward the rear end of the hall, and at the right-hand side he found a small door, which opened upon a narrow stairway leading upward. "The servants' stairway," thought Dick; "now I will be able to get upstairs without danger of being detected."

He listened a few moments to make sure that no one was about to descend, and, hearing nothing, he made his way slowly up the stairs. When he reached the upper hall he found it quite dark at the rear end, where he was, and not so very brightly lighted at the front.

Knowing of nothing better to do, Dick stood still and watched and listened. He thought it possible that he might be so fortunate as to see the king's son go to his rooms.

"I rather think they are on this floor," thought Dick; "and more than likely they are at the front. I would almost be willing to wager that such is the case."

Presently a party came up the stairs and Dick saw that it was General Howe, young George, the king's son, and a couple of the British officers. Bringing up the rear was a man who was evidently the boy's valet.

The boy entered a room near the front end of the hall and was bade good-night by General Howe and the two officers, who then went back downstairs, the valet entering the room after the boy and closing the door.

"Good!" said Dick to himself; "I have done well, for I

have learned the location of the rooms occupied by the king's son. I think that it will be as well to retire, now, and make my way back to the tavern where I have engaged lodgings."

At this instant Dick felt himself seized from behind in a grasp that was like steel.

CHAPTER V.

LIVELY TIMES.

The person who had seized Dick made no outcry. He was evidently very strong, and fancied he could easily overcome the intruder without assistance. Dick guessed this was the case, and was very thankful for it.

The "Liberty Boy" did not by any means despair. He felt that he was in a dangerous situation, but he had been in many and had managed to get out again, and he believed he might be able to do so again.

"So, I've got you, haven't I?" hissed the man in Dick's ear, in a tone of fierce delight and triumph.

"Yes, yes!" replied Dick, in a gasping voice; and simulating pain he added: "Oh, you are hurting me! Please, please do not squeeze me so tight!"

The tone of simulated pain and terror deceived the man, and with a chuckle he loosened his grasp considerable. "Ah, ha! hurt you, do I?" he said. "Well, I don't doubt it. When I get my grip on a man it is all up with him. He might as well give up and be done with it!"

"Yes, yes! I should say so!" half groaned Dick. "Looser—don't crush my ribs or break my arms!"

The man loosened his grasp still more, and this was what the youth was wanting. He took advantage of the opportunity, and by suddenly exerting his own wonderful strength he freed himself from the man's grasp. To whirl and seize the fellow was the work of but an instant, and Dick was careful to secure his favorite grip—a firm hold on the man's throat. This was the most deadly hold imaginable, for the youth was very strong in the fingers, and could quickly choke a man into insensibility, and at the same time the victim could not utter a sound. This last feature was of the utmost importance, now, for Dick was in the building, within hearing distance of two-score men who were his deadly enemies. If his antagonist could give the alarm, Dick would quickly be surrounded and seized; but he could not give the alarm, hard as he tried.

Too late he realized that he had been cleverly duped, and

the knowledge made him almost frantic with rage. He struggled and kicked, in the attempt to free his throat, and at the same time to make a noise that would be heard by some of the British officers and bring them to his aid.

Of course, the man made some noise, but not enough to attract attention unless some one should happen to come out in the hall. This, of course, was likely to happen, and indeed did happen.

A British officer emerged from a room nearly opposite that in which the king's son had gone, and the shuffling of the choking man's feet attracted his attention. He stopped and peered in the direction of the youth and his antagonist.

"What is going on back there?" he called out, presently. "What is the trouble?"

Of course, Dick made no answer, and his opponent could not. The silence did not suit the officer, and he came walking down the hall.

"Answer me, somebody!" he called out. "What is going on here?"

Two or three officers came up the stairs just then and heard what the officer said, and one of them called out: "What's the trouble, Sheldon?"

"I don't know," was the reply; "there's some kind of a combat going on back here, but I can't get an answer to my questions. Hi, there! What's the trouble, I say?"

The officer was now within ten feet of Dick and the man, and could see them struggling, even though the light was very dim. In truth, however, there was now not much in the way of a struggle going on, for Dick had succeeded in taking all the fight out of his antagonist. The fellow was now almost limp from suffocation, the grip on his throat making it impossible for him to get a bit of air, and he had ceased trying to harm Dick and was pulling feebly at the youth's wrists in an unavailing effort to loosen the terrible grip.

Dick realized that it would not do for him to remain an instant longer. The officer was almost upon him, and the three who had come up the stairs were hastening down the hall; in a few moments he would be set upon and either captured or killed, and he must get away. Realizing this the youth suddenly hurled his victim from him, and straight toward the officer. There was a collision, and down went the officer with a thump, with the almost limp form of Dick's late antagonist on top of him.

"Help! Murder!" yelled the startled officer. "What is this? Is a king's officer to be killed right in the British headquarters? Take him off!"

Doubtless the officer thought he had been knocked down

by an enemy; at any rate he began kicking and struggling, and succeeded in throwing the limp form of the man off, and leaped to his feet and drew his sword just as the other three officers came up. Doubtless, in his excitement, he would have run the almost insensible man through, but one of the brother officers seized his arm.

"Hold!" he said; "don't do that! There was another man, and I think he is the enemy. I believe this fellow is one of the servants."

"There was another, I know," the officer agreed. "Of course; what was I thinking of? The other fellow is the enemy. Come, and we will run him to earth!"

As may be supposed, Dick was making good use of the respite thus secured. The instant he threw the limp form of his antagonist from him he whirled and ran down the stairs as rapidly as he dared. He would have had plenty of time to get away in so far as hindrance from the four officers above was concerned, but he ran plump into the arms of a man as he reached the lower hall.

"Hello! Who are you?" the man cried, and grappled with him.

Dick made no reply, but struck the fellow once, twice, full in the face, causing him to stagger back and give utterance to a yell of pain and anger. Following up his advantage, Dick measured the distance and sent in a blow which caught the man on the point of the jaw and floored him as if he had been struck by a pile-driver.

This took some time, however, and by the time Dick had reached the door leading into the kitchen he heard the sound of footsteps on the servants' stairs. The officers were coming!

Dick passed quickly from the hall into the kitchen, and hastening across he opened the door and ran down the steps leading into the cellar. As he did so he heard the trampling of feet above his head and excited voices.

"The place will be worse than a hornet's nest in a minute," thought Dick; "I am not getting away a moment too soon."

He crossed the cellar, opened the door, and passing through the opening pulled the door shut. Then he hastened up the steps, but paused to look about him to see if the coast was clear.

He could see no one in the vicinity, and so emerged from the cellarway and made his way back to the alley at the rear of the building. He ran down the alley to the next street, walked back up the street and then walked around till he was in front of the tavern, but across the street.

There seemed to be considerable excitement in the

tavern; officers could be seen hurrying through the hall, and loud voices could be heard in discussion. Quite a crowd had gathered in the street in front of the tavern, and was watching and listening eagerly.

"What is the trouble?" Dick asked of a man beside whom he was standing.

"I don't know for sure," was the reply; "but I heard some of the people around here say that there was a robber in the tavern, and that he almost killed two of the servants."

"Indeed? He must be a desperate fellow."

"I should say so; he certainly has plenty of nerve to enable him to enter British headquarters in that fashion."

"Possibly he thought he would make a good haul, as the British officers are likely to have plenty of gold."

"I have an idea you are right."

"They say he was as strong as Samson," volunteered another man; "he choked one of the servants almost to death and then threw him against one of the officers with such force as to knock him down."

"Well, well!" said Dick; "he must be a daring rascal."

"Daring is no name for it!"

Dick was glad to learn that it was thought that the person who had entered the tavern was a robber; had it been suspected that the person was a spy, then it would have caused the British to be on their guard in the future, but thinking it was a robber they would not be likely to bother their minds much about it, as they would not think the fellow would dare venture back a second time.

Presently things quieted down in the tavern, and the word went around through the crowd that the "robber" had made his escape, and then the crowd dispersed.

Dick made his way westward, down to the river. It was in his mind to try to come down the river in a boat, when the attempt should be made to capture the king's son. He believed it would be easier to get away in a boat than by horseback, as the horses would have to be left north of the Common, and it would be a long way to have to take the boy after getting out of the tavern, if they should be so fortunate as to succeed in doing this.

The more Dick thought of the affair the more he was impressed with the fact that it was indeed a most ambitious and daring scheme. Still, it was not impossible of accomplishment, and he was not thinking of giving up the idea of making the attempt. No; the more difficult the task the greater the interest he took in it always.

Almost due west of the tavern, at the river's side, was a boathouse, and Dick took particular notice of the building,

for the reason that he thought it possible it might be used when the attempt was made to capture the king's son.

Dick put in half an hour or more looking around, and then took his departure. He fancied that he had attracted the attention of a couple of men who had paused fifty yards distant and had stood there for several minutes.

"I don't want to get into any more trouble to-night if I can help it," the youth said to himself; "I have been very fortunate, but my luck might take a turn."

He walked away, but had gone but a short distance when he saw the two men start in a direction that would enable them to head him off.

"Now, I don't like the looks of that," the youth thought; "it looks as if they intended to stop me."

Dick walked steadily onward, however, and seeming to pay no attention to the two men. That is to say, he did not turn his head but he kept his eyes on the fellows just the same, and soon made up his mind that they were going to accost him. It was not very light, of course; the street lamps being few and far between, but he could make out the figures of the fellows, and as they drew near they were more plainly visible.

Had Dick continued to walk at the pace he was going the two would have approached him from one side or partially from the rear, and not wishing this to happen, if they should attack him he would be taken at a disadvantage, he slackened his speed and walked slowly.

"I can't get out of an encounter with them without running away," the youth thought; "and as I do not expect to do that I will time myself so as to let them come ahead, instead of behind me."

It happened this way, and when the two were in front of Dick they stopped and, turning, faced him.

"Couldn't ye giv' er pore feller er shillin'?" whined one, the smaller one of the pair.

"We hain't had nothin' ter eat fur more'n er day," said the other; "kain't ye make et two shillin's?"

Dick had been sizing the fellows up and now he thought he knew what they were—toughs and desperadoes, who hung around the sailor's dramshops of the river front and made a precarious livelihood by robbing drunk sailors and any other people who might fall in their way. They had seen Dick down on the river front, saw he was alone, and had evidently made up their minds to try to rob him.

The youth was on his guard at once and kept a watchful eye on the fellows. "I have no shillings to give you," he said. "Why don't you go to work?"

"Work!" whined the small one. "We kain't git en-

work ter do. We've tried an' tried, an' nobuddy'll giv' us ennythin' ter do."

"Thet's er fack," from the big fellow; "whut b'twixt dodgin' ther blamed redcoats an' tryin' ter git work whut ain't ter be got, we hev er mighty hard time uv et. I'm nearly starved, an' ef ye hev er heart in yer buzzom, mister, ye'll sartinly giv' us ther matter uv two shillin's."

"I have no money to spare," said Dick.

"D'ye reely mean et?" whined the little fellow, but with an intonation of anger and disappointment in his voice.

"Say, ye kain't mean et!" from the big one. "Ye couldn't be so heartless."

"Oh, go along; you are a couple of frauds!" said Dick. "Get, now, for I'm in a hurry and you are blocking my path."

"Whut's thet? Ye dar' ter call us frauds?" almost howled the big man, in an angry voice.

"I can hardly believe my ears!" squealed the small fellow, dancing about in his anger and excitement.

Dick, who had sized the fellows up carefully, and did not believe they were very dangerous, could not help smiling; the affair had more of the aspect of a farce than anything else, and it was plain that the two men were more vagabonds than desperadoes. Still they thought they might intimidate the one youth by bluster, and they strode forward, making threatening motions with their fists.

"Hand over yer munny!" growled the big man. "We fixed ye, perlite-like, fur er couple uv shillin's, an' ez ye not on'y didn't see fit ter giv' 'em ter us, but had ter add insult ter et by callin' uv us frauds, now we air goin' ter git even with ye by makin' ye han' over all yer munny. D'ye heer?"

"Yes, yes! Han' 'et over!" the little chap cried; "an' be in er hurry erbout et, too!"

"Oh, you want all my money, eh?" remarked Dick, with a peculiar intonation to his voice. It meant something, but the fellows did not know it.

"Yes; an' we're goin' ter hev et, too!" in a fierce voice. "Han' et over an' be quick, er we will shed blood!"

"So you want my money?" slowly and as if not sure that he had heard aright.

"Yes, yes! Han' et over an' don' fool erbout et!"

"All right," said Dick, making as if to reach to his pockets, but in reality taking hold of the butts of his pistols; "here it is!"

As he said "Here it is," he drew his pistols quick as a flash and covered the two with the weapons.

"As my hands are otherwise employed I shall have to ask you gentlemen to take my money out of my pockets

yourselves," said Dick, calmly; "I am sorry to put you to so much trouble, but——"

He got no further. The two had stood still, staring in open-mouthed amazement and terror into the muzzles of the pistols, dazed, temporarily; but now they suddenly recovered the use of their faculties and limbs, and with wild yells of terror they whirled and darted away at the top of their speed. Never did two rascals run faster, and after looking after the two for a few moments, the youth gave utterance to a low laugh of amusement, and returning the pistols to his belt went on his way.

CHAPTER VI.

DICK HAS TROUBLE WITH THE LANDLORD.

He made his way to and up Broadway, till he came to the tavern where he had engaged lodgings for the night. Dick had ridden down into the city, from the American encampment up on Harlem Heights, and his horse was in the stable back of the tavern.

Dick had expected that he would be in the city two or three days, but he had been so fortunate that he had learned as much in the one evening as he had expected to learn, and he had made up his mind to leave the city and return to the patriot encampment at once. If they were to capture the king's son the quicker the attempt was made the better, as he might take the first ship back to England, and the chance to capture him would be lost.

Dick went around the corner of the tavern and made his way back to the stable. The hostler was sitting on a stool, half asleep, in the entry, when Dick appeared, and when the youth ordered him to get his horse ready and bring him around to the door the hostler said he would do so, and went to work to bridle and saddle the animal, while Dick went back to the front of the tavern and entered.

"I guess I will not stop over night with you, after all, sir," he said to the landlord.

"Why not?" gruffly.

"For the reason that I have changed my mind," replied Dick, somewhat shortly, for he did not fancy the man's tone.

"Humph! kinder notionate, ain't you?"

"Well, if I am it is my own business, sir," retorted Dick. "I have ordered the hostler to bring my horse around to the door, and, now, if you please, let me know whether the

sum I paid you for the room is sufficient to cover the cost of the feed for the horse."

"The rent for the room is rent for the room," was the gruff reply; "you owe me two shillings for horse feed."

"But I am not going to use the room, so let that go on the feed for the horse."

"Can't do it. You must pay me for the feed."

"But I tell you I am not going to use the room, so that money is, by right, mine; and you should be willing to let it apply on the feed."

"You can use the room if you like. If you don't choose to do so it is your own fault."

"Oh, that's the way you figure it, is it?" remarked Dick.

"Yes; two shillings for horse feed, please."

"Do you know what I think of you?" asked Dick, calmly.

"No, can't say that I do," was the reply.

"Well, then, I'll tell you: I think you are a robber!"

"What's that!" The landlord glared at Dick in angry amazement; it seemed as if he could hardly bring himself to believe the evidence of his own hearing. "You don't mean that you dare to say that I am a robber?" he added, fierce rage in his tone.

"Yes, that is just what I mean to say; and it is the truth, too!" Dick was angry, and it was plain to be seen that he did not care what the landlord thought about the matter. There were three or four men seated at tables in the room, for it was a combined office and barroom, and they stared at Dick in amazement and wonder.

The landlord was a big man, and evidently muscular; but he was fat, and it was plain that he would not be equal to any long-sustained strain on his physical being. His wind would not hold out. But to his mind the idea of a young fellow like Dick talking saucy to him was ridiculous; so ridiculous, in fact, that he delayed smashing the youth, as he otherwise would have tried to do off-hand. Now, he placed his arms akimbo and said: "Young fellow, on account of your youth and ignorance I will be easy on you. If you will hand over the two shillings without more words I will let you off."

"Thank you!" said Dick, ironically.

The landlord hardly knew how to take this. He waited, however, glaring meanwhile at the youth, an expectant look on his face.

"Well, are you going to pay me?" he finally asked. Dick shook his head.

"You are not?" there was threat in the man's tones.

"I have already paid you."

"You haven't."

"Didn't I give you four shillings for the room?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm not going to use the room so you are four shillings ahead. I think it no more than right that you should let that pay for the horse feed. You will be two shillings ahead, even then."

"No such thing. As I have told you, you can use the room if you like. The horse feed must be paid for."

Now, the truth of the matter was that Dick did not have any money to throw away. He did not feel that he was called upon to pay the man any more, and had made up his mind not to do so. He felt that by refusing to do so he would get himself into difficulty, but he did not care for that. Money was hard to get, and he was used to difficulties.

"I will pay you no more money," said Dick, decidedly; "by rights, you ought to refund two shillings of my money."

"What's that? Bosh! That money belongs to me, and I want the two shillings extra, and I want it at once! Do you hear?"

"Oh, yes, I hear."

"Well, are you going to hand the money over?"

"I told you that I would do nothing of the kind."

A hoarse growl of rage escaped the landlord's lips. He came out from behind his bar, rolling up his sleeves as he did so.

"I'll have the money or the worth of it out of your hide!" he hissed.

"Let me give you a piece of advice," said Dick.

"What is it?"

"Go back behind your bar and stay there."

"What for?"

"So as to be safe."

"To be safe?"

"Yes."

"From what?"

"From me."

Dick spoke so quietly and confidently that the landlord stared for a few moments in wonder. Then he burst out laughing.

"You are quite a joker," he said; "did you hear that, boys?" to the men sitting at the tables. "Wasn't that a good joke? Ha! ha! ha!"

"Yes, yes! A good joke! Ha! ha! ha!" from the men, and they, too, laughed loudly.

"You will find that it is no joke if you attempt to lay your hands on me," said Dick, calmly.

The landlord stared.

"Then you really meant what you said?"

"Of course I meant it."

"Humph!"

Still the landlord stared. He looked Dick over, from top to toe, and then shook his head.

"You must be a fool!" he said.

"Thank you."

"Oh, you're welcome. But I repeat, you must be a fool or you wouldn't talk saucy to me, who can eat you up in one bite!"

Dick smiled.

"I think you will find me the biggest and toughest bite you ever took," he said.

"Bah! I guess you are considerable of a blow."

"No."

"You are not?"

"No."

"Then you are, as I said a while ago, a fool."

"I will prove to you that I am neither a blow nor a fool, if you attempt to put your hands on me."

"That's what you said a while ago."

"And I meant it."

"Why, boy, you would be as helpless as a cat in the mouth of a bulldog, if I took hold of you!"

"Try it and see."

"Then you positively refuse to pay the two shillings?"

"Positively."

"Think well before deciding finally, my boy."

"I have given the matter all necessary thought."

"Would you be willing to be knocked down and kicked out of here for two shillings?"

"No."

"Then you had better hand the money over."

"No."

"Well, then, that is just what is going to happen to you; you are going to be knocked down and kicked out of here!"

"Just a moment," as the other made a motion as if to advance.

"Well?"

"Are you going to do this all alone?"

"Do you think I will need help?" with a sarcastic grin.

"I do."

"Well, I won't."

"But you will find you are mistaken, and what I wish to know now is whether or not these men here will come to your assistance when they see you getting the worst of it?"

The landlord laughed aloud.

"You needn't be afraid," he said; "I give you my word that none of them will interfere. They are patrons, that is all, and would not feel called upon to take up my

quarrel. But the talk is silly. There will be no occasion for any one to think of aiding me."

"That is what you think."

"It is what I know."

"You are mistaken."

"Mistaken, am I?" with a sarcastic grin.

"Yes; you just think you know."

"Oh, that's it, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, you'll find that I knew, all right, my boy."

"And you'll find that you only thought you knew."

"Bah! there is no use fooling away any more time talking."

"You are right; if you are going to do anything, go ahead and do it. I am waiting to be knocked down and then kicked out of doors."

"All right; you won't have to wait any longer. I'm going to do that very thing right now!"

The landlord rushed forward and when he was within striking distance, struck out with all his might, straight at Dick's face. Needless to say his fist did not land. Dick ducked just sufficient to let the huge fist pass over his shoulder; at the same time he struck the landlord a terrible blow in the stomach, throwing his own body forward and putting all his weight behind the blow.

The result of the blow was all that Dick could possibly have desired. Down went the landlord with a thump and concussion that jarred the entire building, a grunt of pain escaping him at the same time. He rolled and kicked around on the floor and spluttered and gasped at a great rate, while the men at the tables stared in open-mouthed amazement, and then gave utterance to exclamations of amazement and wonder.

"That beats anything!"

"Who would have thought it possible?"

"The young fellow told the truth!"

"So he did."

"I don't understand it."

"Neither do I."

"It is simple enough, gentlemen," said Dick, quietly; "he is as fat as a hog and all I had to do was punch him in the stomach; that took all the wind out of him and rendered him hors de combat for a while."

"But he is twice as large as you are!"

"And that is just what ails him. That is the trouble. The race is not always to the swift; neither is the battle always to the larger and stronger party."

"I guess you are right."

"Of course I am. Why, I could thrash two or three

such fellows as this at the same time and not try very hard, either."

"It's a lie!" the landlord cried, suddenly finding his voice; "it was all an accident, your striking me! You can't do it again—no, not in a hundred years!"

Dick laughed.

"Why, landlord, I can do it again in less than half a minute, if you will get up and give me the opportunity. It is no trouble at all to knock such fellows as you around."

"A boaster! that's what you are!" spluttered the landlord; "and I will prove it by getting up and knocking the head clear off your shoulders!"

"Oh, don't do that, please!" in a mocking tone. "Don't be so severe with me; please don't!"

Three or four of the spectators snickered, and the landlord heard them and was made terribly angry. He scrambled to his feet and glared at Dick.

"I'm going to settle with you now!" he said. "I'm going to smash you, as I would a fly!"

"That will be terrible!" murmured Dick, but he did not look as if he were very badly frightened, as indeed he wasn't.

"I'll show you how terrible it will be!" howled the landlord, and again he rushed at Dick.

CHAPTER VII.

INTO AND OUT OF A LOT OF TROUBLE.

This time Dick did not duck or dodge. He stood his ground, and just before the landlord was ready to strike, leaped forward and dealt him a blow between the eyes. It was not a very hard blow as Dick designed it simply for the purpose of stopping the man's rush, and in this he was successful. The landlord came to a stop and even staggered backward a bit, and a howl of pain and rage escaped his lips.

This was what Dick had expected would happen, and he acted at once. He measured the distance and struck the landlord a terrible blow right over the heart. Down went the man, with a thump that shook the building, and he writhed and twisted and then rolled and kicked at a terrible rate. He kept this up for nearly half a minute, and then finally grew still, so far as kicking was concerned, but continued to groan and moan. Finally he rose to a sitting posture and looked up at Dick in a wondering manner.

"Say how did you do it?" he asked.

"How did I do it?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"Why, knock me down in the way you did?"

"Why, that was easy," said Dick, quietly.

"Easy?"

"Yes; no trouble at all."

"I can't understand it."

"Why not?"

"Why not?"

"Yes."

"For the reason that I am a man, and a good, big one too, while you are only a young fellow—not much more than half my size."

"Your size is a detriment to you, landlord."

"A detriment to me?"

"Yes; you are not nearly so good a man as you would be if you were not so fat."

"Well, that may be, but I never had my size worked against me before."

"No?"

"No; and I've acted as my own bouncer for years."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; and in that time I have thrown hundreds of men out of here."

"Is that so?"

"It is."

"Well, I think I can explain that."

"How?"

"The majority of the men whom you have thrown out of here were under the influence of drink, either wholly partly, and that rendered them practically helpless; is that not the case?"

The landlord nodded. "You are right," he admitted, "but I never realized before what a detriment drink is to a man when it comes to a test of strength. The men I have thrown out of here were always absolutely helpless while I got hold of them."

"The drink was as much of a detriment to them as your fat is to you," with a smile.

"That's right; but, say, could you do this over again? knock me down and pretty near kill me, I mean, as you have just done?"

"Oh, yes," replied Dick, briskly; "just get up and I will show you."

But the landlord shook his head and made a grimace.

"You must excuse me," he said; "I will take your word for it."

"Oh, you don't mean to say that you have enough already?" exclaimed Dick, in simulated surprise.

"More than enough."

"But really we haven't begun to enjoy ourselves yet. Get up and I will show you a few more tricks that I know will interest you and arouse your admiration—for I can see you are a man who admires good and artistic work."

The landlord shook his head. "I have enjoyed myself all I care to, thank you," he said; "I have no desire to have you show me any more tricks unless you try the tricks on some of those fellows, yonder, who were snickering a minute ago," with a nod toward his patrons at the table.

"Oh, there is no reason why I should do anything of the kind, in their cases," said Dick; "they have not insisted that I owe them anything, or threatened to knock my head off, or anything of that kind."

"True; well, then, you may call this thing ended."

"Ended?"

"Yes; I'm going to get up, now, but I don't want you to hit me."

"Oh, all right; but I won't promise not to hit you again."

"You won't?"

"No; if you say anything more about my having to pay you the two shillings, I shall certainly give you another clip that will put you down on the floor again."

"Oh, then it is all right; I won't say anything more about the two shillings."

"You won't?"

"No."

"You will let the money I paid for the room go in payment of the feed for the horse?"

"Yes."

"Oh, very well; then I shall not bother you. You may get up without fear of my striking you again."

"All right; I'm glad to hear you say that, for I wouldn't have you strike me again like you did the last time for a hundred pounds, to say nothing of two beastly shillings."

"Very good; I am glad to see that you have become reasonable."

The landlord grinned a sickly grin as he struggled to his feet.

"Who wouldn't become reasonable," he asked, "when he is met by such persuasion as you have given me?"

Dick smiled and several of the men at the tables laughed aloud. The landlord turned an angry face toward them.

"You can laugh all you like," he said; "but I am not a fool. I know when I have enough, and I am not ashamed to acknowledge it, either."

"That is sensible," said Dick. "A man isn't brave or

sensible when he continues a contest in which he knows he has no chance; he is a fool."

"That's the way I look at it; and as you have proven yourself too much for me in a contest, I shall not continue it; no, not if all the idiots in New York were to he-haw at me."

This was a hard hit at the men who had laughed at him, but none of them seemed inclined to resent being called idiots.

"You say you ordered your horse to be bridled and saddled?" the landlord asked.

"Yes; and to be brought to the door—ah, I guess that is the hostler now," as the door opened.

But it wasn't the hostler. Instead of one man, five entered. At a glance Dick recognized them. Their blackened eyes and bunged-up faces gave him sufficient clew to their identity: They were the five redcoats who had stopped Helen Morrison on the street and with whom he and the girl had had the encounter, and from whom they had been forced to flee.

The redcoats were all more or less under the influence of liquor. They staggered as they walked across the floor, and one who seemed to be the drunkest one of the lot called out, eagerly: "Hurry, lan'lor'n give 's sumthin' t' drink. W've jus' s-seen a—a—g-ghosh, an' we wan'—wan' t' d-drown th' mem'ry uv it. Giv' us sumthin' t' drink—quick!"

Then one of the four, who was not quite so drunk, happened to notice Dick and he gave a start and looked at him more searchingly. A look of delight came into his eyes.

"Here he is, boys!" he cried. "Here's the fellow that knocked us around, down on the street an hour or so ago, and then got us into that trouble in the house. Let's settle with him! Let's kill the scoundrel!"

"Yes, yes! Go for him!" cried another, and they began fingering their weapons.

Dick did not intend to stand still and permit the redcoats to shoot him down. They were so befuddled with liquor that they could not work quickly, and he had time enough to do his work.

He leaped forward, struck out first with right, then with the left hand, and down went two. Crack! crack! and down went two more. They could not dodge or move quickly, and hence could not avoid the blows.

There remained but one man, and he was the one who was most thoroughly intoxicated. He managed to draw a pistol, but before he could cock the weapon Dick was upon him, had seized hold of him. With only a partial

exertion of his wonderful strength Dick hurled the red-coat aside and the fellow struck the floor and rolled over and over across it, the pistol falling from his hand.

Then Dick leaped to and through the door. He had hoped that the hostler would be there with the horse, but was disappointed, for there was no sign of horse or man. Dick ran around the corner of the tavern and back to the stable. He entered and found the hostler just adjusting the saddle.

"Great guns, man! what made you so slow about bridling and saddling my horse?" cried Dick. "Hurry! I am in a terrible hurry to get away from here."

"Ef ye want et done quicker nor whut I've done et, go erhead an' do et yerself!" growled the hostler.

"All right; I'll do it. Stand aside." Dick gave the hostler a shove, which sent him staggering back, and brought forth an angry exclamation from him.

"Fur tuppence I'd smash ye fur thet!" he cried.

"Oh, shut up!" cried Dick, whose blood was up, and he went to work to fasten the saddle on.

"Whut's thet! Ye tell me, Bully Conn, ter shut up? Say, I've er good min' ter smash ye fur yer imperdence!"

Dick paid no attention to the fellow, and went on with his work. He knew the redcoats would be out of the tavern in a very few moments, looking for him, and he wished to get away without being forced to have another encounter with them.

"Did ye heer whut I sed?" cried "Bully Conn." "I sed that I have er good min' ter smash ye!"

"Oh, shut up or I'll smash you!" retorted Dick, as he finished the work and started to lead the horse out of the stable.

With a snarl of rage the hostler leaped toward Dick and struck at him. Dick threw up his arm and warded the blow off, and then out shot his fist, and catching "Bully" right in the throat, floored the worthy. Then Dick led the horse out of the stall and the animal managed to step on the hostler, causing him to yell with pain.

When Dick reached the door of the stable it was to see the five redcoats just coming around the corner of the tavern. He realized that now he would be in danger, for the fellows would be somewhat sobered by their experience in the tavern, and would be ready to shoot.

Realizing that it would be necessary for him to do something, and do it quickly, Dick leaped out through the doorway, and, drawing his pistols, fired two shots at his enemies. Both bullets seemed to have taken effect for two of the redcoats uttered cries of pain and one of them dropped to the ground, crying out: "Oh, my leg!"

The other three redcoats fired quickly, they having their pistols in their hands; indeed, they fired too quickly, for the bullets, while they came somewhere in the youth's vicinity, did not hit him.

This was his opportunity, and Dick made use of it. He leaped into the saddle and urged his horse forward, but at that instant the hostler leaped in front of the animal and seized hold of the bridle.

"Ye don' git erway so easy, cuss ye!" the hostler cried. "Yer ther furst man thet ever knocked Bully Conn down an' I'm goin' ter git even with ye fur et!"

"Out of the way!" cried Dick. "Out of the way or take the consequences!"

But the hostler was an obstinate fellow and he paid no attention to the youth's words. He hung to the bridle rein and managed to hold the horse back so that he could not make any forward progress. This would not do as the redcoats would be upon him in a few moments, and Dick leaned forward and dealt the hostler a blow on the top of the head with the butt of one of the pistols.

The fellow uttered a gurgling cry and let go of the bridle rein and sank to the ground, where he lay still, evidently unconscious. A touch of the heels and a command in a sharp voice, and the horse leaped forward. He bounded over the prostrate form of the insensible hostler and knocked down one of the redcoats who made an attempt to grasp the reins.

The other four uttered yells of anger and excitement, and leaped forward to attempt to stop Dick's flight, but they were too late. They could not do it and the horse went thundering out onto the street and up it at a gallop.

Dick had gone only a short distance, however, before he saw that he was coming face to face with a party of British dragoons. The redcoats back at the tavern saw the dragoons, and realizing that they still had a chance to get even with the youth who had caused them so much trouble, they called out eagerly:

"That fellow is a rebel! Stop him! Don't let him get past you!"

Dick realized that it would not do to try to get past the dragoons, and so he lost no time in doing the only thing that was left for him to do. He stopped, whirled his horse and galloped back in the opposite direction. Of course, the five redcoats did their best to stop the youth, but their pistols were empty and they could not fire upon him, so they were powerless; and all they could do was to yell for the dragoons to catch the fugitive, that he was a "rebel."

The dragoons had not been expecting anything of the

kind, so were taken by surprise by the appearance of the fugitive, and by the time they could get it through their heads what it was that was desired of them, the youth had not a very good start of them. They set out in pursuit, however, and galloped down the street as fast as they could make their horses go, yelling to Dick to stop and surrender.

Of course, Dick did not do anything of the kind. That was the thing farthest from his thoughts; instead of stopping he urged his horse onward at renewed speed.

At the first cross street he turned down it and rode to the next street running in the opposite direction; turning again he rode northward, and when the redcoats got to the street they suddenly awoke to the realization of the fact that the fugitive, if he were indeed a "rebel," had been too smart for them in that he was now headed toward the north, in which direction lay the patriot encampment, and they were behind him instead of between him and his destination.

They put spurs to their horses, however, and gave spirited chase. They would overhaul the fugitive, if such thing was possible. But they soon found that it was not possible; the fugitive's horse was too swift for them.

They continued the chase till the streets of the city were left behind, and until the Common had been crossed, and then, feeling that they could not overtake the supposed "rebel," they turned back.

As soon as he learned that the dragoons had given up the pursuit Dick allowed his horse to drop into an ordinary gallop and rode onward at a moderate gait. An hour later he was in the patriot encampment on Harlem Heights.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE THE KING'S SON.

Dick did not bother to make his report that night, as the commander-in-chief had gone to bed, and it would not have been worth while getting him up. Immediately after breakfast next morning, however, Dick went to headquarters.

General Washington greeted him pleasantly.

"When did you get back from New York?" he asked.

"Last night, your excellency."

"You were not gone long."

"No, sir; I was more fortunate than I expected to be, and so got back much sooner than I had anticipated."

"You had good success, then?" The commander-in-chief looked pleased and interested.

"I did, your excellency."

"Then you learned where the king's son was staying?"

"Yes, indeed; I saw him, sir."

"You did?"

"Yes, sir."

"How large a boy is he?"

"Well, about an average size for his age, which is fourteen, as you know."

"Yes. Where was he when you saw him?"

"Out on the piazza of Fraunce's Tavern."

"Ah, so that is where he is quartered?"

"Yes, sir; that is British headquarters."

"I suspected it would be. How came the boy to be out on the piazza, and how did you know it was the king's son?"

"General Howe came out with him, sir, and introduced him as the king's son—there was a big crowd around. I judge that this is done every night."

"Ah, yes; trying to make the king popular by making a show of the son," said General Washington.

"I guess that is the idea."

"Now the question is, do you think it possible to enter the British headquarters, secure the boy and carry him away, Dick?"

The commander-in-chief looked searchingly and somewhat anxiously at Dick, who was silent for a few moments, thinking. Then he said:

"It is hard to say, your excellency. Of course, it will be a difficult and dangerous undertaking, but it is not an impossibility. The only way to answer that question is by making the attempt."

The commander-in-chief nodded his head in assent.

"Yes," he said, "it is a daring scheme, a very daring scheme, and it is impossible to even make a guess as to whether or not it will be a success."

"That is what I think, sir."

There were a few moments of silence and then General Washington said: "I suppose you do not know in what part of the tavern the king's son has rooms?"

"Yes, I learned that."

"You did?" in surprise.

"Yes, sir."

"How did you manage it?"

"I entered the tavern by way of the cellar, made my way upstairs and was there when the boy went to his rooms, and saw where he went."

"That was a daring feat, Dick."

The youth laughed and blushed with pleasure at the praise implied in the great man's tone. "There was no other way to learn, sir," the youth said; "and knowing it would be a big aid when we should make the attempt to secure the boy, I decided to find out where his rooms were located, if possible."

"It was a great feat, and the knowledge will be of inestimable value to you, too, as you have said."

"Yes; we will know just where to look for the boy."

"So you will. Well, you are willing to make the attempt to capture him, Dick?"

"Yes, sir; not only willing, but eager."

The commander-in-chief smiled. "I had an idea that was the answer you would make," he said.

"Who wouldn't be eager to make the attempt to do such a thing, sir?" he asked.

"I suppose that there is not a man in my army that would not be glad to be a member of a party making the attempt," agreed the great man; "but I shall place the matter wholly in your hands, Dick. I feel that if any one can succeed, you can. Take as many men as you wish, and do the work in your own way."

"Thank you, your excellency; I shall make every effort to make a success of this affair."

"I am sure that you will do your best, my boy, and that is all that can be asked of you."

The two talked for half an hour or more, and Dick told the plans which he had formed. The commander-in-chief approved of the idea of going down in boats, and said he thought it was the best thing to do.

"And you will make the attempt to capture the king's son to-night?" he asked.

"Yes, your excellency, to-night."

Presently Dick bade the commander-in-chief good morning, saluted and withdrew, and hastening back to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys," told them of the attempt that was to be made to capture the king's son.

"Say, I'm going to be one of the party that goes down there to-night, Dick!" said Bob Estabrook.

"So am I!" from Sam Sanderson.

"And I!" from Mark Morrison.

"You can count me in!" said Tom Harris.

All the "Liberty Boys" wanted to be members of the party, but this, of course, could not be; so Dick told them that he would select seven of them to go along. "Eight of us will be enough," he said. "If we succeed it will not be through force but on account of cunning and stealth, and eight will be plenty."

Dick selected the seven whom he wished to have along and the others made the best of it, though they were disappointed at being left out. Still, they did not say a word, did not express dissatisfaction. Dick had a right to select whom he chose.

The youths put in the day making preparations. They went down to the river and got a couple of boats ready for the trip down to the city. The oars were wrapped with blankets, to muffle them and make it possible to move through the water without making any noise to speak of, and such other things as were calculated to add to the success of the expedition were done.

Soon after dark the eight youths took their places in the boats, four being in each boat, and with the words of encouragement from their comrades who were down to see them off, ringing in their ears, they started.

They rowed out well into the river, and then moved slowly and cautiously down the stream. They had plenty of time, and there was no hurry, for they would not dare make an attempt to enter the tavern where the king's son was staying until well along toward midnight, and things did not quiet down around British headquarters until half-past ten to eleven o'clock.

There was no danger that the youths might run against a British warship, and there was need that they should go slow and be careful. It was on this account that they had started so early, it being now only about nine o'clock. This would give them two hours and a half to make the trip down the river if they wished so much time.

But it did not take them half that long. They made the trip in a little more than an hour, and were so fortunate as to avoid British ships. Dick, who was in the leading boat, kept on till they came to the boathouse where he had noticed the night before. He steered his boat till it was right beneath the rear window of the boathouse. Then he took up a rope, with a sharp-pointed hook on the end; this hook he tossed up and after two or three tries he managed to make it catch in the window-sill. Dick pulled down with all his strength until sure the hook had taken firm hold, and then he began climbing the rope, by the over hand, sailor fashion. He was soon at the window ledge which was quite wide, and soon succeeded in raising the window and climbing through into the boathouse.

Now Dick was silent, listening. He wished to find out whether or not the attention of any one in the vicinity of the boathouse had been attracted. In such a dangerous undertaking as this, too much care could not be taken.

The "Liberty Boys" were indeed engaged in a dangerous undertaking. So far they had escaped discovery, and

a signal from Dick they, one after another, climbed up the rope and through the window.

Would they succeed in capturing the king's son? This was the question which was constantly in the minds of the youths, and there was no way of answering it satisfactorily save by making the attempt.

The last youth to leave each of the boats brought the painter up with him and these were made fast so as to keep the boats from drifting away. This done, the "Liberty Boys" settled themselves down to wait. It would be an hour or more before they would wish to make the start on the daring expedition, and they were glad that they had such a pleasant and comparatively safe place to stay.

The time passed slowly, but at last Dick said they would start. "It is past eleven," he said, "and I think that by the time we get to the tavern things will be quieted down for the night."

Then he led the way to the front of the boathouse, and easily opened the door, it not being locked. The fact was that the boathouse was not in use and so there being nothing in it that any one would care to steal, it was not deemed necessary to keep it locked.

The youths emerged into the open air, and closing the door behind them followed Dick up the street. It was a cloudy night, and this was good for the "Liberty Boys." There were street lamps, of course, but they gave but little light on any night, and on this night, when there was a sort of fog in the air they gave less than usual. This made it possible for the youths to keep from being seen by the few people who were out, as the footsteps of pedestrians could be heard before the owners of the feet came in sight, and this gave Dick and his comrades time to conceal themselves till the person was past and gone.

It was only a few blocks to the British headquarters, and the youths were not long in reaching the building. They approached from the rear. Dick was eager to find out whether or not the cellar door had been made secure; he had broken the door open the night before, and hoped that the damage had not been discovered.

The slanting door was lifted and the youths went down the cellarway steps. Dick tried the door and found, to his great joy, that it was not fastened.

"They did not think to look at the door," he said to himself; "they must have thought that I entered in some other direction. Well, it is good for our purpose; and now that we have succeeded in getting into the cellar I think that we shall be able to get into the building proper."

Dick led the way across the cellar and up the stairs to the door opening into the kitchen. He tried the door and

found it fastened. This he had expected, and calling Bob to his aid they placed their shoulders against the door and pushed with all their strength. For a few moments the door resisted the strain and then suddenly something gave way with a crash that sounded abnormally loud in the stillness, and the door opened so suddenly as to cause the youths to topple forward upon the kitchen floor.

The youths were silent for as much as five minutes, listening intently. They feared the noise made by the bursting open of the door might have aroused some one. No noise was heard, however, and they finally decided that the noise had not been heard.

Dick, who had been there before and knew the way, took the lead and the others followed close upon his heels. It was quite dark in the kitchen, but Dick knew where the door leading into the hall was located, and easily found it. He passed through, into the hall, and found that it was dimly illumined by a candle burning at the farther end. This aided them in seeing to make their way, and they were soon climbing the narrow stairs leading to the second floor.

They were soon in the upper hall and found it faintly illumined also. Dick hardly knew whether to take this as a good sign or not. He did not see why the candles should be left burning; however, he did not stop to study over the matter long. It would do no good. The thing, now, was to make the attempt to secure the king's son, and get him out of the tavern and away.

Dick led the way along the hall and the youths paused in front of the door of the room occupied by the boy. Dick tried the door and found that it was not locked or bolted. He pushed the door open and entered the room, the other "Liberty Boys" following. It was dark in the room, but just as they were about to begin the search for the bed occupied by the king's son, a door which connected with another room opened and a man, holding a candle in his hand, appeared on the threshold. He caught sight of the party of youths, and instantly gave utterance to a wild yell of terror.

"Help! Murder! Robbers! Rebels!" he fairly shrieked.

CHAPTER IX.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

"What's the matter, Augustus? What's the matter?" called out a boyish voice from the adjoining room.

Dick and his companions had been taken wholly by surprise. They were not looking for any such occurrence, and the man's appearance was so sudden, and he had given utterance to the cries so promptly that they did not have time to even make an attempt to stop him. They heard the words from the other room, too, and realized that it was the voice of the king's son. They were almost within arm's length of the boy, and now it seemed as if their well-laid plans must fail. The entire house would be alarmed, and in a minute or so the halls would be thronged with British officers. What should they do?

This was the question which the youths asked themselves, but Dick decided it for all of them. He leaped forward and struck the valet—for such the man was—a severe blow, knocking him down. To bound on into the adjoining room took but an instant, and there Dick saw the king's son sitting up in bed, a look of surprise and terror on his face.

"Who are you?" he cried.

Dick leaped forward and was about to seize the boy when he was arrested by a cry from Bob.

"The halls are full of redcoats, Dick!" was what Bob said. "What shall we do?"

Dick leaped back into the room and looked out. He saw that Bob had spoken the truth. He closed the door and bolted it.

"We must escape by a front window," he said. "Come!"

They re-entered the room where the king's son was and Bob nodded toward him. "Shall we try to take him with us?" he asked.

At this instant there came a loud pounding on the door and a voice called out: "Open! Open instantly or we will break the door down!"

"Don't wait! Break it down instantly!" another voice cried. "The king's son is in there and those rebels may kill him! Break the door down!"

Dick recognized the voice as that of General Howe, and knowing that there would be no time to bind the arms of the king's son and gag him, he decided to abandon the attempt and make their escape, if such a thing was possible.

"This way!" he called to the youths, and led the way into another room, which was evidently the front room of the suite. It faced on the street, Dick was sure, and slamming the door behind the "Liberty Boys," when all had entered he bolted it and then hastened to the window. He quickly raised it and saw that his surmise had been correct. The main street lay below and in front of them.

"Quick! Through with you, boys!" said Dick. "We

have not an instant to spare! They will be in here in jiffy!"

Indeed there was reason for thinking thus. A crash had been heard, which marked the breaking down of the door leading from the hall into the first room of the king's suite, and the door leading into the room the youths were in would go next, and soon, at that.

The "Liberty Boys" were accustomed to obeying orders without question, and they went through that window, one after another, with great speed and promptitude. There was a veranda outside and they leaped onto that. From the edge of the veranda to the ground was only about twelve feet, and the youths did not hesitate, but leaped down without ceremony. The majority were on the ground by the time Dick came through the window, and at that instant the sound of the door crashing in was heard. Dick had not escaped from the room an instant too soon.

Just as he reached the edge of the veranda and leaped two or three of the British officers appeared at the open window and they at once set up a yelling, which was calculated to arouse all the sleepers within half a dozen blocks.

The youths bounded away up the street at the top of their speed. They had not gone far before men came swarming forth from Fraunce's Tavern and set out in pursuit. These men were British officers, and they had not stopped to don their uniforms; scarcely one of them had paused longer than to don his trousers and seize his sword and pistols; then they had run out upon the street and were just in time to see the party of youths disappearing up the street.

Onward dashed Dick and his comrades, and suddenly they found themselves confronted by a party of redcoats who had undoubtedly been aroused by the yelling, and had rushed out into the street just in time to head the fugitives off.

The "Liberty Boys" were not daunted, however. They turned down a side street and ran a block or two in that direction. Then they turned up another street, following it to about the middle of the block and darted into the mouth of an alley. The redcoats were after them, and Dick hoped to throw them off the track by this maneuver.

The ruse was not successful, however, for the redcoats turned up the alley. Dick was suddenly thrilled with a feeling of pleasure, for he recognized one of the houses the rear yard of which reached to the alley, as being the home of Mr. Morrison. The youth knew that if he could enter the house unseen by the pursuing redcoats, himself and comrades would be safe.

He made up his mind to make the attempt, and cautiously told his companions to enter the yard. The "Liberty Boys" did so, and advanced to the back door. Here they paused and Dick knocked as loudly as he thought it safe to do.

Much to the surprise of the youths, and greatly to their joy and relief, the door was opened almost immediately. "Who is there?" came in a low, cautious voice.

"It is I—Dick Slater!" the youth replied.

Instantly the door swung wide open and the youths filed through the opening and into the house. Then the door went shut and a bolt clicked into place.

"Are you pursued?" the voice—which Dick recognized as belonging to Helen—asked.

"Yes, Miss Helen."

"Were the redcoats close upon your heels?"

"They were coming down the alley when you opened the door."

"Do you think they could have seen you enter?"

"I hardly think so."

"Let us wait here, then, and listen so as to learn whether or not they saw you."

"Very well; but how came you to be up at this time of night, Miss Helen?"

"I was reading till late and had not yet gone to bed when I heard loud yelling in the direction of Fraunce's tavern. I thought of you at once and wondered if you were making an attempt to capture the king's son."

"That is what we were doing," said Dick; "but we failed. The alarm was given and we were forced to flee."

"Too bad; well, I thought that if you had made the attempt and had met with failure and were pursued, that you might come here; and so I came downstairs and took up my position in the lower hall. I alternated between the front and back doors, listening, and when you knocked happened that I was just coming to this door. I hesitated to open the door—ah, listen!" in a thrilling whisper. Footsteps could be heard out in the yard, and a few moments later there came a knock on the door.

Of course, the girl nor any of the "Liberty Boys" made a response.

After a few moments had elapsed there came another knock and a louder and more imperative one.

Still the girl and the youths maintained silence.

Again came the knock, and then followed, in a hoarse voice: "Open the door! Open in the name of the king!"

This did not have any effect, either. The hearers happened to be persons who did not have any respect for the king or acknowledge that he had any authority.

Thump! thump! thump! "Open the door! Open the door!"

Silence, as before.

"Open the door or we will break it down! Open, I say!"

The girl and the youths remained quiet.

Thump! thump! thump! Rat-tat-tat! "Open the door! Open it, or down it goes!"

The girl whispered to Dick to follow her, and he in turn told the youths to follow him, and all stole away along the hall.

"I fear they will break the door down, presently, unless it is opened to them," said Helen; "and if you will follow me upstairs I will show you a secure hiding place and then I will go back down and open the door and pretend that I have just been aroused out of my slumber."

"That is a good plan, I think," said Dick.

The girl led the way upstairs and along the hall, to the farther end, and then she pressed on a certain panel and it and three others slid back, revealing an opening. There was a candle burning in this hall, which made it possible to see fairly well.

"Step through the opening," said the girl; "there is plenty of room in the apartment for all of you. When I have gotten rid of the redcoats I will come and let you out."

"Very well," said Dick, and then all passed through the opening and the panel slid shut with a click.

Then the patter, patter of the girl's slippered feet sounded, as she made her way down the stairs and along the lower hall.

Helen Morrison was a brave girl, and she did not hesitate. She made her way to the door and opened it at once, as she feared the redcoats would break it down.

"Who are you and what do you want?" she asked, in firm tones.

"Ah, young lady, I beg your pardon for disturbing you," said the leader of the redcoats, in a tone that was half respectful, half mocking; "but we were chasing a party of rebels and we fancied they took refuge in this house."

Helen shook her head. "You are mistaken," she said.

"They did not enter here, then?"

"They did not."

"You are sure?" The redcoat was evidently somewhat suspicious.

"Do you think I would tell what is not true?" The girl threw her head back and gazed scornfully and unflinchingly into the eyes of the man.

"Oh, I would not say that, of course."

"You might as well say it as insinuate it."

"Well, my dear young lady, you know these are war times, and people seem to hold the truth in slight esteem in such times. If you have no objections we would like to search the house."

"Oh, I have no objections whatever; you are at liberty to search the house—though I suppose it would make no difference if I did have objections; you would search the house just the same."

"You are right about that, young lady." Then the man ordered ten of his men to remain at the door and stand guard so as to prevent the escape of the fugitives if they tried to get out; with the rest he began searching every room. He borrowed the candle of the girl and so was enabled to see.

They searched every room on the ground floor, and went down into the cellar and looked there. Not finding any signs of the fugitives they then went upstairs and looked in all the rooms on the second floor.

Here they were met by Mr. Morrison, who had been awakened at last by the trampling of feet, and had dressed and come forth from his room. When told what the men were looking for he laughed in scorn.

"You might look a hundred years and you would not find anybody here save myself and daughter and the servants," he said. "You are losing valuable time and giving the fugitives time to make good their escape."

"That may be," said the redcoat leader, "but," doggedly, "now that we're in here we will finish the job and look thoroughly."

"Yes, let them look thoroughly, father," said Helen; "then they will know that we have not harbored the rebels. If they did not look everywhere they would go away thinking that perhaps the rebels were here and we don't want them to think that when it is not true."

"You are right, Helen; well, go ahead, gentlemen. Look everywhere. You are at liberty to do so."

The redcoats continued their work and looked in all the rooms on that floor and then made their way into the attic and looked thoroughly, but, of course, to no avail. The fugitives were nowhere to be found.

"Well, you didn't find them?" said Mr. Morrison, when the redcoats came back down out of the attic.

"No; we will have to acknowledge that we were at fault in thinking they entered this house."

"You are right; we have no intention of or desire to harbor rebels, sir."

"I am glad to know that."

"We would rather hand a rebel over to you, any time, than harbor one and keep him hid from you."

Mr. Morrison had a reputation which he wished maintain, as being a loyal king's man. It was of value to him as it protected his house from being plundered by the redcoats.

"I see we made a mistake in thinking the rebels came in here," was the reply. "Well, I am sorry to have troubled you."

"Don't speak of it, sir."

"In these times we cannot take anything for granted, you know."

"True; quite true."

"Well, good-night, sir, and young lady."

"Good-night," replied Mr. Morrison, while Helen merely bowed.

Then the redcoats trooped downstairs and out of the door. Mr. Morrison following and closing and locking the back door.

As soon as her father had gone downstairs Helen ventured to open the sliding panel. "Come forth," she whispered, and the youths obeyed.

"Father doesn't know you are here, and I want to surprise him," Helen said to Dick.

As soon as he had closed and locked the back door Mr. Morrison came back upstairs; and when he saw the youths standing there in the hall he started and an exclamation escaped him.

"Goodness! it is Mr. Slater and some of his men!" cried. "Well, well! and I did not have the least idea you were here! It's a good joke on me and on the redcoats too! Ha! ha! ha!"

CHAPTER X.

BACK TO THE PATRIOT ENCAMPMENT.

Dick shook hands with Mr. Morrison, and then introduced his companions, all of whom the gentleman greeted cordially.

"And you knew they were here all the time, Helen," he exclaimed, giving her hair a pull. "Aren't you ashamed to fool your father in that fashion?"

"I thought it as well to keep you in ignorance till the redcoats had gone, father; then you could be perfectly frank and honest in your statements that the 'rebels' were not here."

"That's so; that was a good idea."

"Yes, indeed," from Dick.

"But how happens it that you are here and being looked by the redcoats?" Mr. Morrison asked. "Did you make the attempt to capture the king's son and fail?"

"Yes, sir; we made the attempt, and, I am sorry to say, made a failure of it."

"Too bad! Too bad!"

"Yes; we were in hopes that we would succeed."

"It would have been a great stroke had you done so."

"Yes, it would have given the commander-in-chief a long lever to use against the king."

"So it would. But will you stay over night with us, Slater?"

"No, indeed."

"You are not going to make another effort to capture the king's son?"

"No; that would be folly, I fear."

"Undoubtedly; they will guard him closely from now on."

"I judge so."

"Yes, if they suspect that you were trying to capture him."

"Well, they cannot help suspecting it."

"Then it is all up; your scheme to capture the king's son will never succeed."

"I think you are right; well, it can't be helped."

"No."

Dick and his comrades remained at Mr. Morrison's house an hour and then bade the gentleman and his beautiful daughter good-by, and took their departure.

"Which way, Dick?" asked Bob as they headed down the street.

"To the boathouse, Bob."

"We go back up to the encampment, then?"

"Yes, and at once. There is no use of fooling away more time down here."

"I suppose not."

"No; our plan to capture the king's son has failed and the quicker we get out of the city the better it will be for us, for they will be on the lookout for us."

"You are right; we are not out of the woods yet, I am thinking."

"We are not, for a fact; we may run onto a party of redcoats at any moment."

The youths made a half circuit in order to avoid passing Fraunce's Tavern, as they realized that there would be stir and confusion there and likely plenty of redcoats to give the alarm if the "Liberty Boys" should be seen.

They were not successful in escaping notice, even as it was. They were suddenly startled by hearing yells, and

looking around they saw a party of redcoats coming as fast as they could run.

"We'll have to run for it, boys!" said Dick, and the youths set out at the top of their speed.

After them came the redcoats, yelling at the top of their voices, and this attracted the attention of still others.

"The entire British force will be after us directly!" said Dick. "We will have to get into our boats in a hurry and get away from here or it will be all up with us."

The youths were good runners, and held their own, and indeed gained a little. Presently the boathouse was discerned, through the darkness and fog, and the youths headed straight for it. They reached it, and, opening the door, entered.

As they did so a volley rang out and the bullets fairly hailed around the door, spitting against the wood in a most spiteful manner. Luckily, although two of the boys were hit, neither was severely wounded, and all ran across the room, and one after another crawled through the window and slid down the rope into the boats. Just as Dick, who was last, went through the window the door of the boathouse was burst open and the redcoats came rushing in.

Dick slid down the rope, cut it with one stroke from his knife and then the youths rowed away as rapidly as possible.

The redcoats rushed to the window and fired out and downward, in the hope that they might inflict some damage, but they were unsuccessful. The bullets went wild.

The "Liberty Boys" put all their strength into the effort and rowed as swiftly as they could, and soon they were well out in the river.

"I think we are safe, now," said Dick.

"But we had a close call of it," from Bob Estabrook.

"Yes, indeed."

"It's too bad that we made a failure of our scheme to capture the king's son," said another of the youths.

"Yes; but it couldn't be helped," said Dick; "we did our best."

"So we did."

"Say, fellows, isn't that girl, Miss Morrison, a beauty, though!" remarked George Hardy.

There was a chorus of laughter at this from the rest.

"See where George's thoughts are!" said Bob Estabrook.

"He must be hard hit."

"I am; I acknowledge it," was the prompt reply. "Who wouldn't be? Isn't she the prettiest and sweetest girl you ever saw?"

"Pretty enough," said Bob, carelessly; "but she's not the style of a beauty that I like."

"She is very beautiful," said Dick; "and she is as brave and good as she is beautiful. If I were you, George, I would go in and win her, if I could."

"I'm going to!" was the decided reply. "I'm going to visit New York City to-morrow, redcoats or no redcoats."

"Well, if the redcoats get after you you can make that an excuse for going there," said Bob.

"That's a good idea," said George; "but I'll find an excuse for going there, don't you fear!"

"Trust George for that!" laughed Bob.

"Sh!" cautioned Dick. "I think I hear oars!"

All listened intently and they plainly heard the sound of oars.

"We are pursued!" said Dick.

"It would seem so," agreed Bob.

"Well, we will have to row our hardest!" said Dick. "Bend to it, boys!"

The youths worked with all their might, but no matter how hard they rowed the sound of the oars could still be heard behind them.

"They're gaining on us!" said Dick, after a while.

"Do you think so?" from Bob.

"Yes, I can hear the sound of the oars much plainer than I could a while ago."

The youths kept on, however, but after a while Dick said:

"We will have to try to dodge them, fellows. They will catch us if we row straight ahead."

"What shall we do?" asked Bob.

"Turn and head across the river."

The youths did so and kept on till they were almost to the west shore; then they turned the bows of the boats up stream and continued in that direction. Dick listened intently and presently said:

"I believe we have fooled them. I don't hear the sound of oars now."

"I think we have thrown them off the track," said Bob; "they could see us, and our oars, being muffled, made no noise and it was easy to slip out from in front of them."

"We will have to be careful when we go to cross the river to reach camp, though," said Sam Sanderson.

"Yes," agreed Dick; "we might run right into them."

The youths rowed steadily and when they were opposite Harlem Heights they turned the bows of the boats and headed straight across the river. They rowed slowly, now, and literally felt their way as they feared they might run into the British boat or boats at any moment.

Their fears were well founded, for when they were about halfway across the bow of one of the boats struck against

the side of a boat which was lying at rest. The was not seen till the moment of collision, and then it was immediate and great excitement. The boat was full with redcoats, of course, and they had been watching and listening for the youths, but the muffled oars had fooled them, and the first they knew of the presence of the boats was when the bow of one struck against their boat. They had intended to fire upon the "rebels" instant they put in an appearance, and had their pistols in their hands, but the impact caused their boat to roll and made them lose their balance, and by the time they straightened up and ready to do some work the "Liberty Boys" were rowing away.

Dick and three of the other youths who were not injured, fired at the redcoats and one or two of the bullets did some damage, and then came a shower of bullets from the redcoats. Their bullets did little damage, however, as of course, the firing was entirely by guess and the youths were enabled to continue their trip toward the shore.

The British gave chase as soon as they could straightened up and their boat headed around, but the "Liberty Boys" had already secured such a lead that they easily reached the shore before their enemies could overtake them.

Indeed, the redcoats did not venture very close to shore; they did not dare. They realized that the fugitives had escaped them, and went back down the river and reported that the "rebels" had succeeded in reaching their patriot encampment.

This information caused General Howe to rage as much like a bear with a sore head. "It is a shame! It is a shame!" he cried. "To think that those rebels should have the impudence to try to capture the king's son! how I wish I could have got hold of the scoundrels! I would have put an end to their careers as sure as my name is Howe!"

All the officers who were present nodded their heads in approval of this statement. "They deserve death at the end of a stout rope!" said one.

"Indeed they do!" from another, and again all nodded assent.

"It was the most audacious scheme that one could imagine!" said General Howe. "And I think I know who was that engineered the affair, too!"

"Who, your excellency?" asked one.

"Dick Slater, the captain of that band of young fellows known as the 'Liberty Boys.'"

The officers nodded.

"It looks like a specimen of his handiwork," said

"There is no doubt of it, not the least," said General Howe; "and if ever I get a chance at that fellow, mark my words, I will put an end to his career! Why, he is more dangerous to the king's cause than an entire regiment of rebels!"

"There is no doubt regarding the truth of that statement," nodded an old officer.

"Do you know," said another, "I believe, now, that the person who entered the tavern the other night, and whom you thought was simply a robber, was this Dick Slater, on spying expedition?"

General Howe slapped his thigh and nodded his head. "You are right, for a thousand pounds!" he said. "It was Dick Slater!"

There was some more rather excited talk, and then General Howe said: "Well, the attempt to capture the king's son failed, and I will see to it that no second attempt will come anywhere near succeeding. I shall have guard kept over the boy the whole time."

This met with the approval of all.

Meanwhile the "Liberty Boys" had reached the patriot campment in safety. The firing out on the river had attracted the attention of the sentinels, and they had called the officer of the guard, who in turn had aroused the camp. When it was learned what the trouble was the "Liberty Boys" having reached the encampment, there was considerable excitement. Leaving the others to tell the story of their adventures to the officers and soldiers who were crowded around, Dick made his way to headquarters, to report to the commander-in-chief.

General Washington was up and dressed. He had been aroused and had heard the firing, and an orderly had brought the news to him that it was the party of "Liberty Boys" getting back from their trip down into the city. The orderly had told him that the youths had not brought one with them, and so he was prepared for the report which Dick made of their failure. He listened to the boy's story with interest and then said: "Well, you did your best, Dick, and I have not a word to say. It was a dangerous thing to attempt, anyway; and I am only glad that you succeeded in making your escape."

After some further conversation Dick withdrew and returned to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys." He told them what the commander-in-chief had said, and the youths voted General Washington a trump.

"I guess I'm the only one who doesn't feel as if our escape was a failure," said George Hardy.

"And why don't you feel as if it was a total failure?" asked Sam Sanderson.

"Because I made the acquaintance of Helen Morrison!"

"Listen to that!" said Bob. "I more than half believe he will go down to New York to-morrow, as he said he would."

"You watch me and you'll see that you have hit the nail on the head," said George, calmly.

And sure enough, about five o'clock the next afternoon he set out. He went on foot, as he said he didn't want to get to the city until after dark, anyway, and then he could dodge redcoats better if on foot than if on horseback.

George did not get back till nearly nightfall of the next day, and his face was all smiles. He looked happy, as indeed he was. He told the "Liberty Boys" that he had gone down into the city, had pretended that he was chased by the redcoats, had made his way to the back door of the Morrison house, and that Helen had let him in and had believed his story about the redcoats. He stayed till morning, and then went out on the streets on some pretended business, but got back in time for dinner. Then he had taken his departure at five o'clock.

"I am well acquainted with Helen now, though, fellows," he said; "and she invited me to call whenever I was in the city—and I'm going to be there pretty often, I tell you!"

"Oh, you conscienceless rascal!" said Bob, with mock severity. "To deceive that girl by a story and get into the house under false pretences!"

"All's fair in love or war," grinned George. We may as well add that the daring "Liberty Boy" visited at the Morrison home frequently, in spite of the redcoats, and that at the end of the war he and Helen were married.

Thus ends the story of "The Liberty Boys' Daring Scheme"—the scheme to capture the king's son. It failed, but it was not through any fault of the "Liberty Boys."

THE END.

The next number (77) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' BOLD MOVE; OR, INTO THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY," by Harry Moore.

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